

The background of the cover is a photograph of a building. The upper portion shows a weathered, reddish-brown corrugated metal roof. Below the roof, a light-colored, possibly plastered wall is visible, featuring a small, dark rectangular window. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, earthy tones like red, orange, and brown, with a semi-transparent dark brown overlay at the top where the title is placed.

The Cameroon GCE Crisis

A Test of Anglophone Solidarity

Editors:

Francis B. Nyamnjoh & Richard Fonteh Akum

With Contributions by:

Azong Wara, first Registrar of the Board.

**His Lordship Paul Verdzekov, former Archbishop of the
Bamenda Archdiocese.**

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Francis B Nyamnjoh

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Preface to the Second Edition

It has been almost 15 years since the publication of the first edition of *"The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity."* Meanwhile, the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board has been in existence for 15 years. The first edition of this publication served as a historical archive which deftly captured the complex trajectories of the crisis leading up to the creation of the GCE Board. The book paints and documents a crisis which mobilized the Anglophone community in Cameroon against a hegemonic Francophone-dominated government intent on "francophonising" the Anglophone educational system. The government's attempt to harmonise Cameroon's Francophone and Anglophone educational systems, was perceived in most Anglophone quarters as an attempt to dilute a stellar educational system and further co-opt them into a union maligned from independence. On the other hand, the government cast their struggle as an attempt to crystallize the unification project embarked upon since independence and formalized in 1972. These disparate interpretations of intent led a unified Anglophone community on a collision course with the government.

The street battles and press wars that ensued pitted a well organized Anglophone community, dedicated to the principles of non-violent protest against governmental authority which was all too quick to use the showers of water cannons and the truncheon of force to silence the protesters. Beyond these confrontations, the first edition of this book also provided glimpses into the organizational ability of the Anglophone community to mobilize themselves into different groups. Such groups as the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), the Confederation of Anglophone Parents' Teachers' Association of Cameroon (CAPTAC), the churches and various associations served as vehicles and platforms for the mobilization of solidarity, unity of purpose and commitment to the virtues of a way of life.

Meanwhile, the negotiations which led to the resolution of the GCE crisis took both Anglophone government insiders and outsiders to press on the salience and resolve of the

community to stand up against the erosion of a system which it valued dearly. The churches and the media in Cameroon, as civil society actors, were sucked into the crisis in varying capacities and with fascinating lessons for future collective action. While the churches sought to defuse a potentially explosive situation, the private press in Anglophone Cameroon provided a vibrant space for Anglophones to articulate their grievances and debate the challenges of the problematic co-habitation imposed on them by the 1961 Plebiscite. The government media also continued to champion the defences of governmental authority. The Anglophone community was not willing to witness the dilution of an educational system which had proved to be internationally competitive, and had produced its first frontline of government officials and representatives, some of whom were involved in the GCE crisis.

However, time has provided varying degrees of separation between the actors, the structures and the crisis which necessitates some analytical retrospection in order to provide a more holistic appreciation of the GCE crisis. This re-examination provides the rationale for a second edition which includes greater historical insights and insider perspectives on the crisis. Some 15 years after the creation of the GCE Board, it becomes necessary to ask the difficult question as to whether it was all worth the fight; whether it has made any difference; whether we can evaluate the GCE Board today in any certain terms. This assessment can only be done within a context of understanding the complex organizational, functional and financial relationship between the GCE Board and the Ministry of National Education which is ostensibly supposed to be its host Ministry. To what extent has the GCE Board enjoyed the financial independence and institutional autonomy needed to promote and protect the excellence and ideals it was created to guarantee?

This edition of *The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity* goes behind the newspaper headlines and street protests with Andrew Azong Wara, the pioneer registrar of the Cameroon GCE Board. Azong Wara contributes an insider's perspective from his dual roles as leader of the Teachers' Association of Cameroon and the pioneer registrar of the Cameroon GCE Board from 1993 to 1997. His narrative is backed by a historical appreciation of the origins of the

“cameroonisation” of the GCE in 1976 and subsequent attempts by the government to transform the administration of the examination. Since the first edition of this publication ended with the formation of the GCE Board and the promulgation of the text of implementation for the Board, this edition goes a step further.

Using the distance provided by time, Andrew Azong Wara goes back to describe the challenges which the GCE Board endured during its initial years of existence. His account captures the relational complexities which evolved between the Ministry of National Education and the GCE Board in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the Board. These complexities had to be dealt with for the GCE Board to become sustainable and successful. Hence Azong Wara provides insights into the negotiations between the leadership of the Board and the Ministry of National Education as well as the sacrifices made by the broader Anglophone community to see the successful functioning of the GCE Board. His contribution also captures the relationships which the GCE Board developed with the many stakeholders and constituencies it was called to relate to.

Another innovation in this edition is the contribution by His Lordship Paul Verdzekov, former Archbishop of the Bamenda Archdiocese. The Catholic Church, through the Council of Bishops and together with other churches contributed significantly both in foregrounding the pertinent issues and in tempering the tensions. However, this contribution goes beyond a description of the role of the churches in the GCE crisis. It provides a flashback with insights into the state of the educational system in former British Southern Cameroons, a system subverted by the administrative control of the centralized government in Yaoundé after independence. Given the juxtaposition of this historical perspective with the systemic changes proposed by the government of Cameroon, the rationale underlying the resolve of the Anglophone Cameroon teachers, parents and students becomes even more evident. It shows a pre-independence educational system which was not only about the production of certificate-carriers but favoured the nurturing of well-rounded and morally upright citizens. It becomes clear that the broader context of cultural dichotomization between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon could not be solved

unless equity was infused into the negotiation of a broad harmonious post-independence existence within and beyond the educational sector.

The comprehensive nature of contributions in this book provides a rich and invaluable archive documenting the collective memory of the struggles over the heart and soul of the Anglophone educational system in Cameroon. It is a reader on the negotiation, challenges and renegotiation of solidarities, belonging, recognition and representation in Cameroon within the Anglophone community on the one hand, and between Anglophones and Francophones on the other. In the voices of the actors in the struggles over the GCE, the readers are given a guided tour on the making and unmaking of communities in a place called Cameroon.

Francis B. Nyamnjoh & Richard Fonteh Akum
January 2008
Bamenda, Cameroon

Preface to the First Edition

The attempt by the Government of Cameroon to reform the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination in 1983 unleashed a socio-political firestorm around Anglophone minority marginalisation and co-optation. This book traces the 10 year historical trajectory of battles that were fought from 1983 to October 1993 for the preservation of the General Certificate of Education examinations in Cameroon. These battles opposed a mobilised and determined Anglophone civil society against numerous machinations by successive governments to dilute the GCE with the rather shallow Francophone secondary education system.

This book has become possible thanks to Dr. Nyamnjoh. As a socio-historical project, it captures their active participation from the initial stages of the struggle to maintain the educational system they had enjoyed and did not want to see perish. In the process, Dr. Nyamnjoh kept notes, pictures and invaluable documents that today provide the basis for the authenticity of this historical account.

As a librarian at the University of Yaoundé I also bore witness to the early part of the struggle. While it is difficult for anyone to claim personal victory for the final outcomes, it is necessary to salute the courage and determination of the Anglophone students of the University of Yaoundé, Missionary bodies, the Anglophone teachers of Secondary Education acting under the umbrella of the powerful Teacher's Association of Cameroon (TAC), and the parents whose efforts were channelled both individually and collectively through the Parent-Teacher Associations.

It is no doubt that the culminating incident in the ten year's saga came on 12th October 1993 when well over one thousand Anglophone parents demonstrated in front of the Ministry of National Education in Yaoundé. With their determination at the zenith, they braved all odds, stood their grounds and suffered the humiliation and human degradation of being sprayed with police water cannons and thrashed with rubber truncheons. Many suffered grave injuries in the process. Simultaneous street demonstrations took place in Bamenda. On

that fateful 12th October, the text granting autonomy to the GCE Examination Board was signed.

This book's factual and well documented narrative will be real history tomorrow. It will be worthwhile having a copy for your library more especially so because it is no denying the fact that the story in the book is also part of the history of the struggle for the liberation of Anglophones in Cameroon.

Peter N. Chateh
President of CAPTAC
Yaoundé Chapter
Yaoundé, June 7 1994

Chapter One

Anglophone Students of the University of Yaoundé Petition against Introduction of a New Cameroon GCE Scheme for Anglophone Schools Nation-Wide

Francis B. Nyamnjoh

On September 27, 1983, the Minister of National Education issued a circular restructuring the GCE at both the Ordinary and Advance levels. This reform, most unpopular and most unwanted among the Anglophones, was greatly contested. The Anglophone students of the University of Yaoundé, already overburdened by grievances and frustrations, saw this as the last straw. Their reaction was spontaneous; they came together and drew up a petition, their lack of any formal leadership notwithstanding. What follows is not only the story of a strike, but that of a people galvanised by a common objective: the resolve to save a way of life.

Even though the Ministerial circular was signed on September 27, 1983, it never circulated beyond official circles until the national weekly *Cameroon Tribune*, decided, probably out of deserved sympathy for the affected masses, to publish the full text on Wednesday, November 16, 1983.¹ But long before this date the discussions, debate and criticism provoked by the text, based mostly on rumour and half-truths, were widespread among Anglophone intellectuals and politicians. The Wednesday paper therefore came only to stimulate a more profound appraisal by the students, of the full extent and implications of the Ministerial circular.

That particular issue of *Cameroon Tribune*, limited in supply, was passed from hand to hand as the anxious students devoured with analytic eyes, the seemingly well-intentioned words of a most responsible and honourable Minister of National Education. Their reaction was so spontaneous and collective, that in a remarkably short time a rally began to be organised under no defined leadership. As wind of the rally

¹ Because of an omission by the publishers of the national daily, the Wednesday 16 issue was in fact not complete; the full text was actually published on Wednesday 23, 1983 (see Appendix 1).

spread, more and more students became interested. No one seemed to ask too many questions, or to want any justification or persuasion. They simply went along, moved by the desire to shout loud and clear: "the Francophone has gone too far." Under the creative initiative of some anonymous members of the Anglophone student body, a rally was scheduled for Saturday November 19, 1983, three days after publication of the Ministerial text, in front of the Amphitheatre 700.

On Saturday afternoon a large crowd of students assembled in front of the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, not at the Amphi 700 as previously scheduled. There, student after student stood before the crowd and passionately volunteered to expose or remind themselves of the plight of the Anglophone students at the University of Yaoundé. Many points were raised, but two stood out: The students expressed their massive and total dissatisfaction with the Ministerial reform of the GCE; and reiterated the need for bilingualism as a *de facto* reality in the University, and not merely a Francophone device for sidestepping or marginalising the English language and its affiliates. That the students were bitter, full of wrath and extremely concerned was distinctly evident in their unanimous decial of the circular and their vote of no confidence in the Minister.

Still under no clear leadership at all, some individuals presented themselves as representatives of different classes in the three faculties (of arts, sciences and social sciences) of the University; and in unanimity they scheduled to meet that very night to draw up a list of pertinent objections as a petition to the Minister's unwanted reform.

It is important to remark that some of the Anglophone students who initially declined to attend the rally under the pretext that there was neither organisation nor leadership and that they had learnt about it only through hearsay, rapidly abandoned their doubts when they got wind of the resounding success of the rally. But before the rally broke off, the protesting students pledged with a oneness of voice to strategically assemble on Tuesday November 22, in front of the Ministry of Mines and Power from where they could march with their petition to the Minister of National Education, whose ministry was situated about two hundred metres away.

Meeting on the nights of Saturday and Sunday for long hours, the volunteers drew up a list of points bordering on two major issues. First, that the recent Ministerial effort to restructure the GCE was a grotesque defiance of Anglophone public opinion; a violation of an individual's right to develop his abilities to the fullest capacity; and an absolute, vicious and calculated attempt at subordinating or effacing the Anglophone educational system to the advantage of the Francophone system of education. Judging this as part of the Francophone politician's consistent and unscrupulous effort to most radically assimilate his acquiescent Anglophone counterpart, the students advocated for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the self-defeating circular with logical arguments illustrating its ridiculous, contradictory, highly unacademic and grossly impermissible nature.

Second, that the lecturers at the University of Yaoundé were too preponderantly Francophone to warrant the institution being termed bilingual. Sparked off by the scandalous dismissal of Dr. Moses Bessong from his post as Accountancy lecturer of undergraduate students at the Department of Economics, simply because he was not yielding enough to teach in French, the protesting students, demanded the his immediate and unconditional reinstatement, and called for a more rigorous bilingualism policy based on justice, equality and academic honesty.

Monday was the day set aside for collecting mass signatures. These were got in their numbers by circulating lists through the various delegates. These signatures were judged very significant by the delegates, as they would stand to witness that the petition had not simply been concocted by a few mischievous minds eager to fish in troubled waters. Instead, it was indeed the collective effort of a wounded community, the jingling testimony of mass discontent. Some better placed delegates generously volunteered to provide for the typing and photocopying of the petition which was to be addressed to: The President of the United Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the Minister of National Education and the Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé.²

² The full text of the petition is given in Appendix 2.

At the stroke of 12:00 on Monday night, all was ready for 8 a.m. on Tuesday. The students had planned to assemble in front of the Ministry of Mines and Power. The petition had been drawn up and copies strategically given out to certain students. The signatures had been captured and caged. But the question on every mind was: Will the students be true to their word? The simplest and surest answer was to wait and see. More so as a series of successive events had ushered in a gathering cloud of fear and uncertainty – the Chancellor had learnt of the planned march by the students and had called a meeting with the Anglophone lecturers of the University. In addition, as the students were to discover in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the nearby Police Post – the 5th Police District – had been alerted and was mobilising the police forces to track down and disperse any mass body from the University. But the police must have been outmanoeuvred, for no unusually large body of students marched out of the University campus that Tuesday morning.

Tuesday November 22, 1983

The first group of students, a handful, arrived the assembly grounds and met half a dozen policemen pacing up and down. These students might have suspected that the police were there for them, but they were not moved. As more and more students poured into the open space in front of the Ministry of Mines and Power, and as many more policemen were being transported to the Ministry of Education and its environs, some fast minds suggested that the students break up into little groups and scatter themselves about, in order to avoid the critical eye of the police and the inquisitive, spectacle-loving public. At about 9 a.m. the crowd, even after spreading out as suggested, was still large enough to attract the attention of ordinary passers-by or the baton-flexing policemen, among whom one could already spot top-ranking officers and even commissioners. Walkie-talkies went into full action as their users began to battle with fast-paced chatter, tension and sweat. But the students stayed calm. None of them carried any weapon. Even a fly was safe with them. Their intention was not to harm. All they wanted was to meet and dialogue, and perhaps, to bring the authorities to reason. Like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, they sought to

experiment with the principle of non-violent protest and its precepts of speaking truth to power and letting the force of argument prevail.

The crowd of students soon swelled to about 2000, and as the police became increasingly threatening, the students took the initiative and began to move towards the ministry of concern. They displayed placards, some of which carried the following messages:

- "LEAVE GCE ALONE";
- "INTEGRATION, NOT ASSIMILATION";
- "BILINGUALISM FOR ALL";
- "ANGLOPHONES ARE CAMEROONIANS";
- "UNITY AT STAKE";
- "DEMOCRACY, NOT ARBITRARY DESPOTISM";
- "DOWN WITH IGNORANT NITWITS".

Armed with placards and resolve they marched steadily towards the "Bastilles" of Education, noiseless and respectful of the thick traffic. The students kept as much to the kerb as possible, trying hardest to cause little obstruction.

Then it happened. Through the folly of an impatient commissioner whom students rumoured was English-speaking, the police made their greatest mistake of the day. They attacked the peaceful students with their biting batons. In the ensuing stampede, further aggravated by the impatient traffic, the assaulted students found themselves in a desperate situation. The consequences were severe. Like sheep fleeing mad dogs, the students rushed blindly and indiscriminately, and indeed like famished dogs, the police pursued them in all directions. Some of the students fell and were trampled upon; some bruised themselves against passing cars; others cut themselves dangerously as they stumbled over stones and metal objects. Many lost their shoes, glasses and watches. There is the outstanding case of a girl whose left eye narrowly escaped utter destruction as she received a brutal cut deep into her left jaw and forehead. She was rushed to the Central Hospital by fellow students as blood gushed out of her damaged face, a face once so beautiful.

The majority of the desperate students took refuge at a parking lot behind the Ministry of Equipment about one block around the corner from the Ministry of Education. Here they

renewed their solidarity with and allegiance to the cause. This, it is worth noting, was by all accounts the most difficult moment for the group and what they stood for. There was a great risk of everything breaking up then, and of even greater risk was that of the cause being abandoned. At first, most of the students were reluctant to persist for various reasons, but principally because of the panic the hostile police had instilled in them. It needed a lot of emotional utterances and impassioned appeals to keep the frightened going. Many speakers used the case of the savaged female student to good effect. At last, even the most cowardly mustered enough courage to stay within the ranks; and once more the group generated the momentum it needed and marched towards the Ministry of National Education. This time they took the back street as they sought to avoid further confrontation with the police.

The walkie-talkies were overwhelmingly effective; streams of armed policemen under the able leadership of determined commissioners flowed into the environs of the gigantic Ministerial block, and at approximately fifty metres away from it the students were barred from proceeding. Road blocks were lined across the street and policemen stationed to check the movement of the protesting students. Finding themselves in such an impasse, the students resorted to singing chants of liberty, equality, unity and patriotism. They expressed in their songs and slogans, their unflinching support for the national President and his policy of rigour and social justice. The President, they sang, would definitely punish all collaborators of his who were doing everything within their powers to jeopardise national unity and harmony, compromise bilingualism, and puncture Cameroon's bi-cultural heritage. The singing was punctuated with slogans, most of which like the songs, were improvised to suit the exigencies of the moment.

The students massed up along the distance separating the ministries of Equipment and Education. The more than 2000 students, now fenced in by the police, generated the determination to fight till the logical conclusion. They were thirsty and hungry as the minutes drained into hours of frustrated expectations. But the students endured with commendable light heartedness their physical and mental torments. They had the iron will to fight on, knowing that any

attempt to give up was simply a postponement of the battle. The answer ought to be sought there and then.

The first authorities that struggled to communicate with the students apart from the brutish police, were the Secretary General of the University, the Dean of the Faculty of Laws and Economics (who was English-speaking), and the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Sciences (also English-speaking). They tried to negotiate with the students, but mutual intransigence made any compromise impossible. These three personalities advised the students to send a delegation of ten with them to deliver their petition to the Minister. They were completely against the students acting and asking to see the Minister as a mob. The students on the other hand, were afraid that a delegation might easily be manipulated into making concessions or simply taken hostage by the forces of intimidation. Some even claimed that the 2000 of them were already a delegation in itself; for, were they not fighting for the interests of all the unsensitised students back in the Provinces? Thus sceptical of the intentions of the authorities, the students, urged on by some of its passionate, self-appointed leaders, maintained their intransigence. They spelt out their positions and stood firmly by them: Either the Minister came down to receive the petition from the students where they were, or the police allowed them to march in en bloc to the ministry and hand the petition over to the Minister.

The authorities' reticence to concede grew proportionately with the intransigence of the students. They declined to listen to anybody short of the Minister of Education. Not even would they have listened to the English-speaking vice-Minister of Education, Dr. Mrs. Dorothy Limunga Njeuma, had she offered to address the students in her boss's place. The Secretary general of the University, having tried in vain to "bring the students to reason", drove back to the campus from where he soon returned with two English-speaking lecturers from the Departments of English and Negro-African Literature. But not even these supposedly familiar men would bring the students to listen to them. All their efforts earned for them was the label "traitors". Back in disappointment they had to go.

What marvelled the students was why it was thought impossible for them to have a dialogue with the man they considered their Minister and servant, responsible to them, the

people who had enabled his appointment. Questions like the following repeatedly circulated amongst the students thirsty for genuine democracy:

- “Why is it that the Minister cannot come down here and talk to us, if he doesn’t want us to rise to him?”
- “Who does he think he is? God? Perhaps he thinks this is still the Ahidjo era, the era of dictatorship.”
- “Can’t he understand that he is Minister because we are there? Would he be Minister over stones?”
- “Can anybody doubt what the Minister is trying to tell us through his behaviour? That we are his colony, without the right to choose. We shall either be clubbed into submission, or flogged to death!”
- “Is there anyone who does not see in his present treatment of us a direct application of his policy of raw assimilation that has embittered us enough to be here today?”

The police remained stationed, like a huge impregnable rock or like a vicious giant serpent ready to strike with deathly venom. The frontline students who were not all there by chance, exchanged words every now and then with all the authorities that came, tried and failed to negotiate. These front liners were in constant consultation with the main body, in order to reassure it that all they said or did remained within the bounds of the collective will. Any front liner who ventured too far as an individual oblivious of the collective voice, was shouted down instantly and forced to cede his place to another by retreating into the faceless crowd. There he stayed till he was repentant enough to earn clemency, but never regained his place in the frontline. Thus to be a front liner and remain one, a student had to keep his ears alert and filter the collective from the parochial as the crowd roared. Such a student had to speak and act with the logic of the protesting students. Nothing he did ought to appear individual or in contradiction of collective interest.

The walkie-talkies were performing communicational miracles; they soon brought the governor of the Central Province rushing to the scene, full of hope that he would succeed where others had failed. But quite like his predecessors, he failed to get the students to reason with him. He was made to understand by the students, that their problem, far from being administrative

was academic, and therefore directly concerning no one else but the Minister of Education. Having tried many times and failed, each time with a greater degree of failure than before, the governor gave up and left.

As time dragged its lethargic feet along, the students thirsted and hungered even more. The police would not allow any hawker to sell to the students; and so they got weaker and weaker. But their determination was great, and they managed to keep going, despite the hunger and the thirst and the heat of the sun. Then with one accord, probably because they were too tired (for it was long past lunch time), the students went down on their bottoms, while continuing to sing. This was good because everyone could now see whoever of the students stood up to make an address, or any authority that came to shatter their hopes.

Students who felt the need to speak passionately on an aspect or another, got up and were listened to. Mob logic reigned supreme, and whoever wanted to be applauded knew exactly what to do or say. Certain students happened to have understood this very well, for they dominated the scene. The speakers who came to stay made no appeal to reason; there was no room for this in the ears of the crowd. The students had taken time to put their petition together, and would not reason along with every Mbarga, Owona or Belinga who claimed to be of the administration, while the real brain behind the mess stayed away from them.

The walkie-talkies were really touching angles! They were doing a formidable job! Not long after the governor went away, a sparkling black car drove up and the students were curious to know the parcel it had brought. The owner's door swung open and out came a man of average height in a black jacket, red spotted tie, and dark grey trousers; a man who declared himself a representative of the Prime Minister's. He spoke in English and it was whispered amongst the students that he was secretary general at the Prime Ministry. Whispers also claimed that he was from the North West Province, and that he was very used to the big and the renown of the country.

After much heated debate on whether to listen to the Prime Minister's messenger or not, the students finally, though reluctantly, decided to give him a chance. Standing in front of

the students, sweating profusely, the messenger waited for them to calm down. It took a tactful front liner a lengthy appeal to bring the students to a minimal level of silence. Then the representative began his address which was interrupted from time to time with boos and jeers. He got uncomfortable and sweated even more as the students, instead of listening to him with respect, accused him of abusing the English language by using words out of context and purpose. This is some of what he said:

- “Word has reached us... a group of students ... around the Ministry of National Education with a point to make.”
- “You should be reasonable.”
- “I know your anxieties very well.”
- “You are government property.”
- “The police are here for your security.”
- “There is no authority above the one I am representing, so go calmly back home. I have noted your point.”

After answering a few of the many questions the students put to him, the messenger took his leave, ignoring all provocations and insults. He was given the President’s copy of the petition before he faded out of the scene, very dissatisfied with the attitude of the students.

When the Prime Minister’s messenger had come and gone, opinion among the students became divided. Some felt that the students must insist until the Minister of Education was ready to personally present himself and receive his copy of the petition in a semi-circle. Others thought it would be a contradiction in protocol practice (hierarchy of credibility) to expect any authority lower than the Prime Minister (represented by his messenger) to attend to them after the latter had come and gone. They advocated instead, a march back to the university campus where the Chancellor could be presented with his own copy of the petition. That to them made more sense than staying on around the hostile ministry, and maybe finally being forced to go away in utter shame and injury. Those of this view eventually carried the day, and again the students were on the march.

In their numbers the students covered the whole breadth

of the road back, causing a hell of problems for the traffic. On this march, the students were a little out of hand. They not only brought traffic to a standstill, but banged cars, tried to uplift some, sent their hands through the windows of others with aggressive intentions to molest women of all categories, and generally filled the air with jeers and insults for the innocent public. In this way they continued till the end of the long march that brought inquisitive eyes and hungry minds crowding on the kerbs.

Once at the chancellery the students, still singing, went into a momentary freak. They crowded the entrance of the building and began cutting off the flowers that flourished along its sides. These flowers they threw into the air with the shouts and screams of an enslaved people agitating for liberty. The very songs that had fed the morning's singing now came back to end the day. But the Chancellor failed to attend to them with required promptitude. Only the Secretary General who had not been heeded in the morning came out again to be denied audience for a second time. Once more the students were ready for nothing short of "our man". So as some inspired volunteers went in to look for the Chancellor, the rest kept the singing alive.

By this time the Francophone students had come around in their numbers to act the spectators. From the rear, they watched what was going on; but unfortunately, they were so drowned by the prejudices and stereotypes that they did not care to learn the genuine reasons behind the protest. And maybe, without a drastic change of mentality, they would never know the veritable reasons for any Anglophone protest in this triangle of theirs.

At last the Chancellor appeared at the door and the students were willing to listen. Calmness took over and the students most ahead were considerate enough to sit down so that their counterparts behind could watch the drama in progress. One of the self-appointed leaders of the students introduced the Chancellor and stepped aside. The Chancellor started speaking in French, but was shouted into abandoning it. The leaders must preach bilingualism through their own personal examples, the students urged. But of all the broken English which the Chancellor spoke with a strong French accent, the only words which the students chose to retain were the

starting phrase: "My fellows, I am..."

The Chancellor loosely promised to look into the problem, took his copy of the petition and that of the Minister of National Education, and turned to go when the student who had introduced him earlier, pulled him back by the sleeve and asked him to stay. Then facing the Chancellor unblinkingly the student declared: "Unless the Chancellor brings Dr. Moses Bessong back to his former assignment as lecturer of the undergraduates at the Department of Economics, we are going to boycott classes and make sure that we assemble here at the Chancellery everyday as early as eight in the morning. This boycott is with immediate effect as from tomorrow." After his declaration in a proud and confident voice, the student released his hostage who regained his Chancellery.

After listening to many more passionate speeches, the students finally dispersed, with promises to be back the following morning.

Wednesday 23, November 1983

As early as 7 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday November 23, 1983, the determined students began to mass up in front of the Chancellery. When the crowd was big enough, although not as impressive as that of the day before, the chanting of songs and slogans began. Every now and again, someone would mount the podium to make a point or two, and be applauded. The impassioned extremists got the most cheers, but one could note that the moderates who had had the last word at the Ministry of Education the day before, were increasingly gaining grounds.

For long the extremists stayed the majority. They held that any attempt to water down their demands or content themselves with half measures, was not to be tolerated. The argument that in a society of divergent interests, one cannot expect to make much headway with intransigence, cut little ice with them. They did not believe, as some would say, that in hunting if you fail to stalk the biggest game, do not fail to stalk the nearest as well. To them the authorities were a monster, a devil without virtue; compromising with it was synonymous to losing one's fight. So they remained firm. Theirs was a zero-sum "win all or lose all" attitude.

The moderates on the other hand, believed in the need for a more realistic approach. According to them, nothing can ever be achieved in a world of competing interests, without some amount of give and take. They argued that since the petition had been handed in to those concerned, it was necessary to give the authorities enough time to study the students' demands. For it was only by such a careful and thorough study that a more reasonable and lasting solution could be found. They failed to see the rationale of rash threats and impulsive decisions. They believed that such an attitude would only further harden the hearts of the authorities against them, for it was a truism that men in authority loathe to be placed on the defensive by the powerless, especially a mob - such as a collective bully of individual cowards. To them therefore, the students ran the risk of defeating their own purpose if little was done to clip the wings of the extremists in their midst.

It is significant to note that these reasoned moderates constituted a very small minority, and that in the crowd, their voices were almost always drowned by the more appealing voices of the passionate extremists. The latter had the added advantage of being in the frontlines, and from time to time could, with absolute ease, fan the flames of extremism and intransigence in the crowd with words of passion, prejudice and stereotypes.

By noon neither the Chancellor nor any of his collaborators had come out with an answer for the students. This indifference or neglect only further inflamed the students who reaffirmed their resolve. After waiting in vain for a little longer, the students decided to disperse, but not before promising to reassemble there at 4 p.m. for the same purpose of extracting an answer from the reluctant Chancellor.

In the afternoon when the students returned, deeper cracks were emerging within their ranks. Some of them could be spotted among the Francophone spectators watching with amusement their more determined counterparts swing between violence and non-violence, with an increasing bias for the former.

A formidable police force had been mobilised since the previous night around the 5th police district and at certain strategic points of the university campus. So far none of them

had come down to where the protesting students were assembled in front of the Chancellery. But they stopped and sent back every taxi or non-university vehicle headed for the campus.

It was in the afternoon that the students came closest to erupting into violence. Already feeling spited by the Chancellor who had failed to show up and drunk with the passionate indoctrinations of the extremist front liners, they surrounded the Chancellery and demanded urgent attention by the Chancellor. Some of them clamoured around the entrance with threats to break in and fetch the Chancellor, if he failed to appear and attend to them.

Before the students dispersed at 6 p.m., two incidents brought them added frustration and scepticism about their future if the present hostilities persisted. They became even more reckless as the Chancellor still would not show up after their threats. Shouting and screaming did not seem to have the required effect. Instead, a young Francophone student, with probable hopes of benefiting from administrative favours, burst out of the tense Chancellery with a pile of bottles which he broke and threw at the protesting students with intent to cause bodily harm. The students panicked and stampeded in different directions, as the intruder gained in courage and rushed into the Chancellery every now and then to replenish his stock of bottles. But his heroism lasted only as long as a coward's. He soon found himself in the hands of some of the students, who gave him a thorough beating.

The second episode involved two men the students had suspected were spies. The students surrounded the first of them, and with searching hands and eyes sought to confirm their suspicions. As they were about to strip him naked, the second came to his rescue with a revolver, threatening to eliminate students if his counterpart was not released with immediate effect. As the spies walked proudly away and the students fled for dear life, the spectator public marvelled at the dimension the whole affair was taking. On their part, the students lamented a golden opportunity missed. Their case, some claimed, "Would certainly have been formidable with a handgun and the signatures and confessions of two spies."

These episodes seriously undermined the authorities in the eyes of the students. If there had been any doubting

Thomases among them, this was enough reason to join ranks with those who believed that the authorities had no genuine concern for the Anglophone students and their plight. The students were convinced that, instead of looking for ways of solving their problems, the authorities had chosen to use every indiscretion to crush them with Machiavellian precision. Else, how came the ready supply of bottles for the vandal from the Chancellery? Could the authorities have infiltrated their ranks with armed spies? Had they thought of and treated them like their children? Children simply crying to daddy to review a decision they had reason to believe had been wrongly thought-out? All this gave the students the bitter feeling of being second-class citizens in their own country. They felt bitter that a problem originally academic had been imposed a political dimension by authorities that looked down on them like dogs. And so they reaffirmed their commitment to save their GCE from the fangs of Francophone assimilation. The brutality of the insensitive authorities had made them relinquish their internal differences and fortified their resolve to stand firm against a common enemy.

With the spies gone, the students came together once more and decided to go home, pledging to be back in the morning. The students agreed among themselves that if by the end of Thursday November 24, 1983, the Chancellor had not come to address them, they would all come out in their numbers with their bags and baggage on Friday morning, ready to go home on holidays. They would assemble in front of the Chancellery and ask for papers testifying that the University of Yaoundé had confessed a lack of need for Anglophone Cameroonians.

As soon as the students dispersed, by 7 p.m. that very night, the whole University campus was invaded by troops armed to the teeth with deathly weapons. So the question remained: would the students be able to meet in front of the Chancellery at 8 a.m. the following morning, as they had agreed?

Thursday, November 24, 1983

What existed only as a remote fear the night before, developed into reality Thursday morning. As early as 6 a.m., truckloads of riot policemen were planted all over the university. Clad in full

riot gear, they were wearing helmets and carried shields, clubs and guns. It was even rumoured that they had tear gas with them. Around the Chancellery, they were poised to attack at the slightest snap of the fingers by their boss. Some students made the attempt to assemble in defiance of their presence and vigilance, but failed. The police rushed after them, dispersing them and beating up the more obstinate ones who dared to stand their ground. It was a pitiful scene as the students, especially the helpless girls, fell and wounded themselves in their attempts to run away from the unrelenting brutality of the riot police. In the mad rush and confusion, some Francophone spectators fell prey to the police clubs as well.

Throughout the day the students never succeeded in meeting in groups of any significance. The vigilant eyes of the police atomised them into little groups or individuals of inaction. Some of the more strategic members, those who provided the motor force, found it difficult to meet one another and make important decisions on counteractions. In this way the day dragged slowly to its end with the heavy police presence telling students to keep their distance and save their lives.

Before Thursday, still during the early hours of Wednesday evening, something happened that strengthened the indignation of the Anglophone public: A radio address by the Minister of National Education.

The Minister's Address of Wednesday Night, November 23, 1983

The Minister of National Education declared on Wednesday November 23, 1983, during an elaborate 8 p.m. national radio news in French, that the restructuring of the Cameroon GCE Ordinary and Advance levels, as clearly stated in the Ministerial circular of September 27, 1983, was neither a reform nor a systematic and deliberate attempt to harmonise it with the Baccalauréat, but a goodwill "retouche" that might give the GCE Advance level the only opportunity to look a little like the Baccalauréat. This "retouche" had to be appreciated rather as a remodelling intended to conform to the nation's bilingual policy and development, and to open wider the gates into the Higher Institutions of learning for the Anglophone students who have been so conspicuously lacking in these institutions.

The Minister also pointed out that the project had taken a

minimum of five years of research, comparative studies, and consultations with the governments of countries with a similar system like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and even Great Britain. According to him, these studies had cost the ministry huge resources, as delegations were dispatched into each of the aforementioned countries to meticulously research and consult with their authorities on how best a group certificate GCE could be effected in Cameroon. All this, the Minister confidently declared, was a consistent and systematic effort to make the education of the youths reflect the imposing realities of present day Cameroonian society.

He also indicated that the project was still in the process of being “retouché”, and promised to give a final word on when it would become effective. This “retouche” in process, the Minister declared, had been undertaken thanks to the active and wholehearted contribution of the Anglophone professors and lecturers at the University of Yaoundé, as well as the staff of the Ministry.

Friday, November 25 to Friday, December 2, 1983

When the late Professor Dr. Bernard Nsokika Fonlon tried and failed to advise the students on the need to organise themselves and agree on a delegation which he could lead to see the Chancellor, it became increasingly difficult for the students to meet or agree on anything. A problem compounded by the vigilance of the omnipresent police. Throughout the weekend it remained impossible for the students to meet. As soon as the police saw a group of five or more, they came attacking.

On Monday, November 28, 1993, a group of six students (five male, one female), accompanied by some Anglophone lecturers of remarkable influence, sat at the Obili residential area in Yaoundé, and drew up a memorandum intended for the Head of State (see Appendix 3). It had been brought to their knowledge that the President had been fed with contradictory accounts of what the student protest was all about. The memorandum was taken to him through the Minister of Territorial Administration, in the presence of the Chancellor, Dean of the Faculty of Laws and Economics, Vice-Deans of the Faculty of Sciences, and the Head of Department of English at the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences. When the six students

came back from the Ministry of Territorial Administration, they were greeted with shouts of “traitors” by the others.

Since Tuesday, when the students started demonstrations, they also decided to boycott classes until the authorities had attended to their demands, especially the demand for the reinstatement of Dr. Moses Bessong. However, the students soon realised that only in the English Department (where the students were predominantly Anglophones), could the boycott be most effective and threatening; in other departments and faculties the Anglophones were largely in the drowning minority. The logic was simple: it was easier to notice that a whole department was boycotting classes than to notice a few students here and there in departments and Faculties crushingly dominated by the Francophones. Thus only the homogenous Anglophone students of the English Department carried out an effective boycott, but with the strong moral support of their minority brethren in the other departments and faculties. Therefore, quite unlike the authorities had hoped, the movement failed to die a natural death because the group, despite the tough times it faced, remained bound together as one, even though internally individuals differed on points of detail.

On Tuesday November 29, a week after the demonstration had started, the Chancellor, quite conscious of his authority, put up a notice urging the students to resume classes immediately. But if anything, his notice only inflamed the students further; for how could he, in an address to Anglophones of the University, have chosen to start his message in French?! Thus they simply defied the notice and continued with the boycott. This is how the Chancellor’s message read:

No. 0034/UY/CH

Yaoundé, le 29/11/1983

Note

Le Chancelier de l’Université de Yaoundé, après avoir pris connaissance et transmis aux autorités compétentes les doléances que certains étudiants ont adressées au Gouvernement invite ces étudiants à reprendre rapidement les cours.

The Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé, after having read and transmitted to the authorities concerned, the grievances that certain students of the university have addressed to the government, invites those students to resume classes immediately.

Le Chancelier de l'Université de Yaoundé
The Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé

The Head of State's Message on Friday December 2, 1983

On the morning of Friday December 2, 1983, it was brought to the knowledge of the protesting Anglophone students of the University of Yaoundé, who were assembled at the grounds of the "Cité Universitaire" that, the Speaker of the National Assembly along with other Anglophone political elites, wanted to speak to them at Honourable Solomon Tandeng Muna's residence. After being assured of their security, the students agreed to go and listen to their leaders. Word was therefore circulated among the student community, asking all those concerned to congregate at the "Cité Universitaire" at 2 p.m., from where they could proceed to the Assembly President's residence by the scheduled 3 p.m. The turnout was very impressive, though nothing compared to the 2000 student crowd that came out to demonstrate and petition against the unpopular Ministerial circular on Tuesday November 22, 1983.

The students' march to the Speaker's residence was quiet, peaceful and serene. The police, present in their numbers, did nothing to stop or obstruct them. The students observed that the forces must have had prior warning to keep their distance from them. Once in the exclusive palace of the Speaker, the students sat on the paved opened space and were ready to hear and appreciate.

The speaker of the House, who was also head of the powerful Cameroon National Union (CNU) party Central Committee delegation bearing a message from the Head of party, Head of government and Head of State, started by thanking the students heartily for having responded so promptly to his call. Then he told them that, as head of a

delegation that comprised: Dr. John Ngu Foncha, Honourable Minister of State Emmanuel Tabé Egbe, Minister of Social Affairs Mrs. Tsanga Delphine, Delegate General of the DGRST Professor Dr. Victor Anomah Ngu, and Head of Department of Negro-African Literature Professor Dr. Bernard N. Fonlon, he had a serious message from the Head of State to deliver to the students immediately.

Then he continued by saying that during a CNU central committee meeting held at Unity Palace on Thursday December 1, 1983, the manifestations and protest of the Anglophone students of the University were among the pressing issues discussed. After the meeting the President of the party, Head of government and Head of State, dispatched the delegation which was sitting before the students, under the prominent leadership of the honourable speaker of the National Assembly. The speaker then went on to deliver the President's message to the students; a message he communicated with all necessary respect for quotations. What follows is a paraphrase of the message:

The President of the Republic, observing that the Anglophone students were conspicuously not adequately represented in the higher schools and institutions of learning, and remarking that this situation was untenable, gave instructions that it should be studied very carefully and recommendations made to him. It is, the President continued, in the interest of both the students and the nation that the situation be rectified as early as possible. He emphasised that at the time of this discussion with the students, the report on the situation had not yet been submitted to him, and that no decision on the matter had therefore been taken. In other words the status quo remained and there should be no cause for concern. In light of this he, the Head of State, was requesting all the students to go back to their classes and to pursue their studies while their grievances and other matters affecting the education of the Cameroonian youths, were receiving appropriate attention. He concluded by saying that, as evidence of the students' commitment to discipline, the nation expected them to respond promptly: Return to classes right away and ensure appropriate calm.

Having conveyed the Head of State's message, the leader of the delegation, Honourable Solomon Tandeng Muna assured

the students that the President of the United Republic of Cameroon in whom the students had so much confidence, was as concerned with their interests as the students themselves were or even more. He therefore called on them to show proof of the confidence they had on him by going back to class as from that very evening, with the conviction that as soon as the Head of State received the report on the situation, he will take appropriate action in their interest and in the interest of the nation.

The Honourable Speaker remarked that in the course of their demonstrations the students had raised other problems. All of these problems were being attended to and no stone would be left unturned until the interests of the nation were satisfied. In conclusion, he requested the students to leave quietly and calmly, and to return to decency, saying that discipline was very important in life, and very vital to the students' welfare and to the welfare of the entire nation.³

The Speaker declined to be asked any questions arising from the President's message, because, even in parliament no MP would dare to table a debate on the President's speech. Moreover, he was simply a humble messenger, and was therefore in no position to answer any questions. Expecting the students to respect him either as a leader who headed the parliament where their parents met to discuss important issues, or at least as their "white haired grandfather", he asked them to applaud the President's message and to calmly and quietly go back to class. Reminding them that they were the Presidents, Speakers and Ministers of tomorrow, he added that "a word to the wise is enough", and retreated to his mansion together with the rest of the delegation.

When the students regained the university campus divisions once again emerged within their ranks. There were those who felt that to go back to class would be sheer cowardice. These renewed their commitment to intransigence and immoderation; the boycott had absolutely to continue. On the other hand, were the moderates who believed that extreme or utopian demands could achieve little more than brutal

³ I am very grateful to Radio Cameroon for its commentary on the Speaker's address to the students on Friday November 2, 1983.

repression by the state. Only a coolheaded, calculated and moderate approach could bring them any victory. They felt that classes should resume as was the wish of the highest authority in the land.

Then, as the students were still arguing on how best to react, the very extremist of them began to doubt everything the Speaker had told them that afternoon. It was possible, they claimed, that the message might not have been authentic. It might just have been a strategy by the Speaker to pull a fast one on the students. Else, if he had really been truthful that the message had been duly written and signed by the President, why did he not pass the paper over to the students? To clear the doubts, a delegation of students volunteered to be dispatched to verify from the Speaker and report back at 10 a.m. on Saturday December 3, 1983. This doubt of theirs was however cleared that very evening, during the 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. radio newscasts in English and French respectively, when the full Presidential message was broadcast nationwide.

Anglophone Lecturers Played a Major Role

In June 1994, in the course of assembling material for this book, I talked to Dr. Clement Ngwasiri of the University of Buea, who volunteered to write the following account of the role played by the Anglophone lecturers of the University of Yaoundé in the GCE saga of 1983:

In 1983 when students of Anglophone origin in the University of Yaoundé went on strike to protest a circular issued by the Minister of National Education, René Ze Nguele, the latter called a meeting of all Anglophone lecturers in the University of Yaoundé at the Conference Room of his ministry.

The meeting which started at about 3.30 p.m. was intended by the Minister to last 10 minutes, in the course of which he called on the lecturers to ask the students to call off their strike and resume classes. In fact, at the end of 10 minutes, the Minister, who was accompanied by the Vice-Minister, Dr. Mrs. Dorothy L. Njeuma, and the Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé, Professor Joseph Owona, picked up his file to leave the hall. At that moment, the late Professor Dr. Bernard N. Fonlon stood up and asked the Minister to sit down. Professor Fonlon gave the Minister a lengthy lecture on Anglophone problems,

concluding that the GCE problem was just the tip of the iceberg. He also noted that the GCE strike coincided with attempts by the Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé to expel Dr. Moses Bessong from the University because it was alleged by Francophone students in his class that he was teaching them Anglo-Saxon Accountancy instead of the UDEAC (Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa) one.

The next speaker after Professor Fonlon, was Professor Mbuagbaw, who lambasted the Minister, accusing him of attempts to assimilate Anglophones. Another speaker, Kitz Mbeboh, addressing Professor Owona, said that the Chancellor had made certain grievous mistakes and that he must take the responsibility for them because he could not make his bed for someone else to lie on. There were many speeches by the lecturers. One of them, Mr. Yewa, told the Minister that there was a Francophone Primary School in Bamenda which was attached to the West Provincial Delegation for Education and that from that day, the Anglophone Primary School in Yaoundé would cease to receive orders from the Centre Provincial delegate for Education. He also said that the Delegate, who had once required Anglophone children to attend school on Saturdays, like their Francophone counterparts, should be told that he had no control over the Anglophone Primary School. Mr. Yewa, turning to the Minister said, "Our educational system is superior to yours and we do not care about your BACC."

The meeting, which was a session of insults on the Minister, the Vice-Minister, who never uttered a single word throughout, and the Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé, lasted three hours - three hours of insults.

The following day, early in the morning, I received word that Dr. John Ngu Foncha, then Grand Chancellor of National Orders, wanted to see me urgently. I drove straight to his residence and he asked me to go to the University and bring the Anglophone students strike leaders to meet him, Pa Muna and Emmanuel Tabe Egbe at Pa Muna's office at the National Assembly President's residence.

It happened that the majority of the strike leaders were in the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences. I was told they were mostly from Manyu-Division. When I met them and delivered Pa Foncha's message, they told me bluntly that it was out of the

question for them to meet Pa Muna. I persuaded them that it was Anglophone leaders who wanted them and that Pa Muna's office was only serving as a venue for the meeting. They conferred amongst themselves and finally accepted to go with me - four of them in all.

When we arrived Pa Muna's office, the students were ushered in and I stayed on in the Reception Room. I sat there for over two hours during which Mr. Joseph Zambo, then Secretary General at the Presidency, kept shuttling between the Anglophone leaders and Mr. Biya.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. René Ze Nguele was the first to leave, pulling a long face. The message which emerged from the meeting was that the Anglophone leaders, who for once spoke in one voice, had decided that Mr. René Ze Nguele must cancel his GCE circular. This was to be done immediately and to be broadcast on radio that same day. These directives were respected to the letter and the day following the Anglophone leaders' meeting, copies of Mr. René Ze Nguele's counter circular were on distribution on the campus of the University and the students reacted by ending their strike.

In the course of the GCE imbroglio, some Anglophone post-seekers in the University reported some of their colleagues to the police as having masterminded the student strike. This led to police harassment which lasted a whole week as they were picked up for questioning almost daily for a week. The last session took place at the high office of the then Delegate General for National Security, Mr. Mbarga Nguele, whose toes were ripped off by the grenades of mutineers during the April 6, 1984 coup attempt.

The above complaint by Dr. Clement Ngwasiri about Anglophone post-seekers working to thwart the collective aspirations of their community, is amply substantiated in an *"Open Letter To The Cameroonian Patriotic Students Of The North West And South West"* (see Appendix 4) written by pro-government Anglophone elites in a bid to diffuse the momentum and sympathy the student protest had gathered nation-wide.

Introduction of Group Certificate Schemes for the Cameroon General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations

In our last edition, we published the full text of the Ministerial Circular introducing a group-certificate scheme for the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) in order to get the general public better informed on the measures before passing judgement, as many people have been quick to do.

But in the effort, a few technical errors and inadvertent omissions crept in, which, taken as a whole are likely to make the comprehension of some of the provisions therein contained somewhat difficult.

Consequently, we have decided to republish just the circular as it is.

The Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination shall be converted into group-certificate examinations organised along definite subject series with effect from the 1985 examination session for the Ordinary Level Examination and with effect from the 1987 examination session for the Advanced Level Examination. Under this arrangement, a candidate for either of these examinations must reach a certain minimum level of attainment as judged from his or her aggregate performance in a specific number and range of subjects in order to qualify for the award of a certificate, in contradistinction to the practice so far whereby certificates are awarded on a single-subject basis.

Structure of the GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination

Subject: The subject (with their corresponding numerical codes) constituting the GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination scheme are divided into groups as follows:

Compulsory Subjects

- 161 English language - 190 French - 364 Mathematic

Group I

- 540 Physics - 081 Chemistry - 040 Biology - 095 Civics

Group II

- 260 History - 209 Geography - 120 Economics - 095 Civics

Group III

- 260 History - 209 Geography - 171 English Literature - 095 Civics

Group IV

(Supplementary subjects)

- 365 Further Mathematics - 180 food and Nutrition - 320 Human Biology

(N.B. With effect from the 1985 examination session, 010 principles of Accounts, 100 Commerce, 262 History (Syllabus B) and 263 History (Syllabus C) shall not be examined as subjects in the Cameroon GCE Ordinary Level Group Certificate Examination. A new History syllabus 260 will replace 262 History syllabus B and 263 History Syllabus C)

Choice of Subjects:

Candidates for the GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination must enter and sit at least eight but not more than ten subjects, chosen as follows: Either

(a) All 3 compulsory subjects + all 4 subjects from Group 1 + one subject from Group II or Group III other than Civics), or

(b) All 3 compulsory subjects + all subjects from Group II + one subject from Group I (other than Civics),

Or

(c) All 3 compulsory subjects + all subjects from Group III + one subject from Group I (other than Civics).

Candidates wishing to take more than eight subjects may choose their extra ones from those remaining in any group.

Grading of Subjects:

Each subject in the Cameroon GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination scheme shall be marked out of 100 and the performance of a candidate in the subject converted into any one of the corresponding letter grades A, B, C, D, E, or F, with Grade A representing the highest level of pass achievement and Grade E the lowest; Grade F represents a fail grade. For purposes of comparison, Grades A, B, and C in the

Cameroon GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination shall be regarded as equivalent to pass grades in the former GCE Ordinary Level (Single-Subject) Examination while Grades D and E shall be regarded as below the former GCE Ordinary level pass standard.

For purposes of calculating the aggregate point score required for the award of certificates in the Cameroon GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination, the letter grades shall be allocated points as follows: A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, E = 1, F = 0

Award of Certificates:

The certificates awarded shall be classified into three divisions namely, Division One, Division Two and Division Three of which Division One represents the highest level of pass and Division Three the lowest. Each certificate awarded shall indicate the various subjects sat by the candidate and the corresponding letter grades obtained.

The criteria for the award of certificates in the three divisions shall be as follows:

- i. To qualify for a division One, division Two or Division Three certificate, a candidate must obtain at least Grade E in all the three compulsory subjects (i.e. 161 English Language, 190 French and 360 Mathematics.) A candidate who fails to fulfil this requirement shall not qualify for a certificate at all, except as otherwise decided by the Minister of National Education.*
- ii. To qualify for a Division One Certificate a candidate must obtain an aggregate score of at least 24 points in his six best subjects.*
- iii. To qualify for a Division Two Certificate a candidate must obtain an aggregate score of at least 18 points in his six best subjects.*
- iv. To qualify for a Division Three certificate a candidate must obtain an aggregate score of at least 12 points in his six best subjects.*
- v. Notwithstanding the provision (i) above, a candidate who fails in one of the three compulsory subjects but obtains an aggregate points score that qualifies him or her for a Division One or Division Two certificate shall be awarded a certificate one division lower than what he or she should normally get.*

(N.B. Candidates who obtain an aggregate score of less than 6 points in their six best subjects shall be barred from entering for the examination

for the next two consecutive sessions, except as otherwise decided by the Minister of National Education.)

Syllabuses of the Subjects:

Except for the newly introduced subjects (i.e. 095 Civics and 260 History where syllabuses and specimen papers are issued for the first time along with this circular, and 120 Economics, 180 Food and Nutrition, 364 Mathematics and 365 Further Mathematics where minor revisions have been made (see copies of syllabuses also issued along with this circular), the syllabuses of the remaining subjects constituting the GCE Ordinary Level Group Certificate Examinations are identical to those of the June 1984 GCE (Single subject) Examination session, which syllabuses have already been issued to centres and institutions preparing candidates for the Cameroon GCE (Single-subject) Examinations.

The Examinations:

The examination in each of the subjects constituting the GCE Ordinary Level Group-Certificate Examination scheme will be similar in style and level of difficulty to those set in the Cameroon GCE (Single-Subject) Examinations from 1980 to 1984 inclusive.

B. Structure of the GCE Advanced Level Group-Certificate Examination:

Subjects: The subjects (with their corresponding numerical codes) constituting the GCE Advanced Level Group-Certificate Examination shall be divided into series with main subject combination or combinations under each series as follows:

Compulsory Subjects - 162 General English Paper - 191 French - 370 Mathematics 'A' for series A only)

Series A (Arts and Humanities)

Main Subject Combinations

I

275 History, 210 Geography, 120 Economics

II

170 English Literature, 190 French, 275 History

III

275 History, 210 Geography, 170 English Literature or 190 French
IV

525 Philosophy, 170 English Literature or 190 French, 275 History

Series B (Economics Sciences)

Main subject combination

120 Economics, 210 Geography, 420 Pure Mathematics with Statistics

Series C (Physical and Mathematical Sciences)

Main subject combinations

I

540 Physics, 081 Chemistry, 371 Mathematics

II

540 Physics, 081 Chemistry, 371 Mathematics, 372 Further Mathematics

Series D (Biological sciences)

I

041 Biology, 081 Chemistry, 540 Physics, 371 Mathematics

II

081 Chemistry, 220 Geology, 540 Physics, 371 Mathematics

III

041 Biology, 081 Chemistry, 220 Geology, 371 Mathematics

(N.B with effect from the 1985 Examination session, 268 History (Syllabus C), 268 History (syllabus D), 381 Mathematics (Syllabus C), 382 further Mathematics (Syllabus C), 391 Mathematics (Syllabus D), 392 Further Mathematics (Syllabus D), 405 Pure Mathematics shall not be examined as subjects in the Cameroon GCE advanced Level Single-Subject or Group-Certificate Examination).

Choice of Subjects:

Candidates for the Cameroon GCE advanced Level Group-Certificate Examination must choose any one of the main subject combinations in any one of the prescribed subject series and sit all the subjects included in the chosen subject combination plus the compulsory subsidiary subjects.

Grading of Subjects:

Each of the subjects in the main subject combinations shall be marked out of 100 and the performance of a candidate in the subject converted

into any one of the corresponding letter grades A, B, C, D, E, O, and F, with Grade A representing the Highest level of pass achievement at principal standard and Grade E the lowest. Grade O represents a pass at subsidiary standard while Grade F represents a fail grade. The compulsory subsidiary subjects shall be marked on a pass/fail basis. For purposes of comparison, the grades awarded in the Cameroon GCE advanced Level Group-certificate Examination in the main subjects shall be regarded as equivalent to corresponding grades in the same subjects in the former GCE Advanced Level (Single-subjects Examination).

Award of Certificates: To qualify for the award of the Cameroon GCE advanced Level Group-Certificate, a candidate must obtain at least Grade E in any two of the subjects in the main subject combination chosen plus a pass in each of the compulsory subsidiary subjects. A candidate who fulfils the first requirement but fails to fulfil the latter shall not qualify for the award of the Cameroon GCE Advanced Level Group-Certificate, except as otherwise decided by the Minister of National Education.

Syllabuses of the Subjects and the Examinations: Copies of the syllabuses, specimen papers and other relevant information concerning the Cameroon GCE Advanced Level Group-Certificate structure shall be issued to the centres and institutions preparing candidates for the examination by the end of the 1983/84 academic year. By and large the examination in the main subjects shall be identical in style and level of difficulty to those of corresponding subjects in the 1982-1986 sessions of the GCE Advanced Level (Single-subject) Examination.

Preparatory Measures: Although the new Cameroon GCE Advanced Level Group-Certificate scheme will be examined for the first time in the 1987 examination session, all intending candidates (both school and external) for the 1985 and 1986 sessions of the Cameroon GCE Advanced Level (Single-Subject) Examinations are strongly encouraged to select their subjects as far as possible in conformity with the main subject combinations specified for the anticipated Advanced Level Group-Certificate Examination. Schools preparing candidates for the Advanced Level Examinations are strongly advised to introduce the teaching of the subsidiary subjects from the 1984/1985 academic year.

General Provisions

With effect from the 1985 session of the Cameroon GCE Examinations a candidate may not enter for both the Ordinary Level (Group-Certificate) and advanced Level (single-subject or Group-Certificate) examinations during one and the same examination session.

All persons to whom this Circular is addressed are requested to ensure that the stipulations contained therein are given the widest publicity among both teachers and intending candidates for the Cameroon GCE Examinations.

The attached Reply slip should be completed and returned to the Director of Examinations, Ministry of National Education, Yaoundé without delay.

Petition Submitted by English-speaking Students of Yaoundé University to the Ministry of National Education on:

- I. *Ministerial Circular of September 27th, 1983, Introducing a New Scheme for the General Certificate of Education Examinations.*
- II. *Discrimination In The Teaching Language In Favour Of The French-Speaking Students (Exemplified In The Case Of Dr. Moses Bessong.)*

Sitting in the Yaoundé University campus on the 19th of November, 1983, we the English-speaking students of the Yaoundé University:

Considering the importance that government attaches to Education in this country:

Considering the necessity for equal educational opportunities for all Cameroonians:

Conscious of the Bilingual Nature of this country as consecrated by the constitution of June 2nd 1972:

Conscious of the fact that government policy is aimed at building a strong and prosperous Cameroon:

Considering the provisions of the United Nations Charter on the Education of the individual;

Considering that two distinct Educational systems exists in this country:

Conscious of the clauses of the Fomuban accord on Bilingualism; Arrived at the following decisions:

- a. That the Ministerial Circular of September 27th, 1983 is totally unacceptable as it does not reflect the interest of the masses,
 - a. The subject groupings do not represent reasonable academic disciplines. For example, the integration of Biology in the course of a student opting for Engineering, is an unnecessary complication of his discipline. Also, what is the relevance of mathematics for a student in say group III?
 - b. The Imposition of Compulsory subjects and the prerequisite success in all of them as a pre-condition for

obtaining a certificate, is detrimental to ambition and the development of natural potentialities, given that this rigorous imposition will divert the concentration of the student from his main subjects. Yet success in all compulsory subjects does not automatically qualify a student for an award of the certificate.

- c. The clause on the award of Certificate "A candidate who fails to fulfil these requirements shall not qualify for a certificate at all, *except as otherwise decided by the Minister of National Education*". This provision risks giving room for arbitrary awards based on non-academic criteria;
- d. The rigidity of the provisions of the new scheme implicitly makes education to be solely school-bound thereby delimiting literacy and disrespecting the provisions of the United Nations Charter on the Education of the individual for those who can not get into school;
- e. The maintenance of the depth of the single-subject examination and the widening of the scope of the group certificate examination will lead to a rather superficial mastery of subjects; ill-preparing the students for Higher Education and reducing the number of passes.
- f. If the aim of the new scheme is harmonization of our Educational system then is this goal not defeated as the new scheme only seeks to destroy one system, the demerits of which have not been brought out?
- g. Considering that for the ordinary level only grades A, B and C are equivalent pass grades in the "former" single subject examinations; Considering that obtaining only grades D and E could qualify a student for a certificate in the group certificate examinations, what would be the status of such a certificate on the International standing?
- h. The circular does not answer the question of equivalence in *Certificates*. What is the equivalent of six papers after five years from the Public Service job-seeking point of view? Is it the same as the B.E.P.C. obtained after four years? Does this not demean the value of one educational standard?

In the light of the above, we hereby strongly call for an immediate revocation of the circular.

- II. With regards to University of Yaoundé, we strongly condemn the discrimination in the teaching language as glaringly exemplified by the ignominious suppression of the course offered in English by Dr. Moses Bessong (Accounting – 2nd year, Cost Accounting and Budgeting Control – 3rd year - Economics department) for the sole reason that such courses were offered in English.

This baseless suppression holds our policy of Bilingualism and socio-academic justice to ridicule. We therefore call on authorities concerned to redress the situation and re-instate Dr. Moses Bessong with immediate effect.

We strongly deplore the existing imbalance in the distribution of the French and English speaking lecturers as evidenced by the following accompanying data, and call for a timely correction of the situation.

We ask that henceforth all official documents be in French and English and Examination questions be set in the two languages.

**Signed, the English Speaking Students
of the Yaoundé University**

Encs

Cc:

His Excellency, the President of the United Republic of
Cameroon

The President of the National Assembly

The Prime Minister's Office

The Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé

The Provincial Delegate of National Education North West,
Bamenda

The Provincial Delegate of National Education South West, Buea

Data

* Faculty *		N0 of Teachers	Total N0 English-speaking Teachers
Year Or	Department		
1st	L A W S	7	3
2nd	English Private Law	7	41
	Public Law	8	
3rd	English Private Law	89	40
	Public Law		
1st	Economics	8	0
2nd	Economics	10	2
3rd	Economics	9	2
	Analyses		
3rd	Management	9	0
1st	History-	11	2
	Geography		
2nd	History-	11	2
	Geography		
3rd	Geography	11	3
1st	Philosophy	13	1
1st	Science	13	1
3rd	Science	13	3

**The Anglophone Students,
University of Yaoundé
28 November 1983.**

Your Excellency Paul Biya,
The President of
The United Republic of Cameroon

Considering the massive and unflinching support that was afforded Your Excellency on 6 November 1983, considering the shock and utter disbelief that seized the hearts of the Anglophone community alongside the rest of the Cameroonians accompanying your announcement of the threat to the security of the State thereto, Considering your effective management of State affairs ever since that date, Having regard to the fact that Cameroon is a Bilingual State with a diverse cultural background, Considering your commendable policy of rigour and moralization, authentic democracy and mutual dialogue, Considering the part played by the Anglophone community in the affairs and development of the nation which is by no means negligible; Considering the recent Ministerial circular reforming the GCE O and A/Level that has touched and will harm the Anglophone students nationwide; Considering the peaceful, calm and unarmed march of the Anglophone Students of the University of Yaoundé to air their academic grievances and those of the Anglophone community at large to the Minister of National Education; And considering that Your Excellency has already been served with a copy of our letter of grievances, a copy whereof was given to the Prime Minister's representative by the body herein above stated; Considering that on the day Your Excellency took office as the Head of the state you took an oath to protect the constitution, and you have kept your promise ever since, an example of which is your Excellency's reinstating of the state above the party, we call on you to give effect to the clause that guarantees equal partnership (i.e. Francophone/Anglophone) in our institution. In the light of that clause, we strongly vehemently, unreservedly and categorically demand the following:

- 1) Annulment of the new GCE Reforms because;
 - i. The new reform gives us no chance to pursue studies out of the country because the new group Certificate Exam lacks international recognition.
 - ii. It is naive and over demanding and too rigorous and will work much hardship considering the singular importance of the major papers. (Mathematics for example does not seem quite important, not to say necessary to an arts student at the advanced level. Besides, for a student who wants to do say economics in the University, it would be unwise to leave out Maths, taking into consideration the fact that it constitutes an important discipline in the Faculty of Economics).
 - iii. It confuses quantity with intensity - we say so because it will seem that the reform imagines that the more the papers taken at A/Level, the better the chances of the candidate in Higher Institutions. This, forgetting that the three normal papers in themselves are too intensive as it were, for a normal reasoning candidate to expect a pass in six papers at the Advanced level; this will exclude the English-speaking students from higher institutions. With reference to the Minister's defence of this reform over the radio in which he claimed that absence of Anglophone students in Higher Institutions like the Polytechnic, the Agricultural School in Ngaoundéré and the Institute of Demography was due to the inadequate Anglophone educational background, we think that the problem is more, one of the Baccalaureate Orientation of these schools rather than the Anglophone lack of mathematical knowledge. We know that students who do three Mathematics syllabuses at the advanced level do not find it easy to get into these schools. In references to the same Ministerial defence of the GCE reform, the Minister points out that the English-speaking population jeopardises the policy of bilingualism by running away from French. By implication the Francophones are more bilingual than the Anglophones. This is practically contrary to reality. We know that Anglophones succeed in all higher institutions they get into though the sole language of instruction is French. Examples: (i) ENAM

(ii) Higher School of Posts and Telecommunications (iii) International Institute of Insurance. We do not know of Francophones succeeding in schools where the language of instruction is English. Besides, there are none. If the Minister is so concerned about the idea of Anglophones studying French, what has he done about the Francophone schools most of which do not even have an English teacher, let alone writing English in an examination? We think that the Minister was out for propaganda because he made his speech in French and chose a Francophone interviewer, both of these never having felt the weight of the GCE exams thereby appealing to the Francophones' emotions rather than their sense of reason. He told a lie that the measure had been studied for seven years whereas the Cameroon GCE has been in operation only for six years. This is paradoxical. Furthermore, he claimed that the British, the University of Yaoundé, Nigeria and Ghana, Sierra Leone authorities had been consulted. So far they have disclaimed their participation in this reform. This tells us that the Minister took the decision alone. In fact the GCE reform and the Minister's speech constitute a provocation and call for doubts as to what is happening and whether such an individual working in such an important position who carries out such measures, has the interest of the Government at heart.

There are three important observations which can be drawn from his speech, namely: Anglophones are lazy; Anglophones choose easy subjects; Anglophones run away from exams. If we look at the current nature of the GCE and Baccalaureate, we will notice that the GCE takes nine days - that is approximately fifty-six hours while the Baccalaureate only takes twenty-three hours. This disparity can be explained in terms of the intensive nature of the GCE Even in the Imperial College of London which is the heart of engineering in Europe, entry conditions are set at five GCE papers, two of them at A/Level. We therefore do not see the necessity for insisting on such elaborate schemes, as the new reform spells out. It will be noticed that the GCE is more intensive than the Baccalaureate

which truly and honestly only attempts to meet up with the GCE O/Level. Most of these problems arise due to the fact that the foundation of a bilingual nation has not been laid down. The Government should first be bilingual, and then the people will eventually become bilingual. At reunification a reward was promised the bilingual Cameroonians. We propose that the state appointment and promotion in the civil service should take into consideration the individual's degree of bilingualism. This would promote national bilingualism and make government institutions more effective. Thus, bilingualism which is now being made to look like liability would become an asset which we could even export. It must be noticed that the GCE problem and Dr. Moses Bessong's problem (the lecturer whose lectures were withdrawn by the University authorities on the order of the Minister of National Education because they were delivered in English) are only indicative of a long standing problem in our nation. They should not be viewed per se but should be looked at as instances of the failure of Bilingualism and the francophonisation of the United Republic of Cameroon. There are no Anglophones in IFORD. The reason is that they are not even allowed to write the competitive examination. Rather they are advised to apply to Ghana. We begin to ask ourselves if Ghana is a Province in Cameroon where one can go be taxi. Perhaps the government makes provisions for journeys to Ghana.

In the school of Communication (ASMAC) the entry requirement is three Advanced level papers for Anglophones; for the Francophones, the Baccalaureate. This suggests that two papers at A/Level are no longer equivalent to the Baccalaureate. There are no Anglophone teachers in Higher Institutions like Polytechnic, School of Agriculture Ngaoundéré, ENAM and EMIA whereas there are many qualified Anglophones in the labour market. We have only a few bilingual schools spotted here and there in the country and mostly the Anglophone Provinces, such that English-speaking Cameroonians working say in Bertoua or Ngaoundéré, find that they have to send their children to Francophone schools if these children must acquire education. Considering our policy of Bilingualism, we propose that:

- (1) Bilingual primary schools be set up in most if not all the

Provinces of the Republic from provincial to divisional to sub-divisional and even district levels. This is because we find that if a child had a good bilingual basis at primary school level, the need to run away from either French or English in Secondary school would not arise.

- (2) Bilingualism be instituted in all our Institutions of Higher Education particularly in ENAM, Higher School of Post and Telecommunications and more so in the University where there are teachers who do not understand a word of English and have to correct scripts written in English.
- (3) There are even lecturers who are too impatient to correct scripts either in English or French. We demand that a vigorous staff development policy be instituted so that even if we do not have one-tone correspondence of English and French-speaking teachers there should be a parity to protect the minority.
- (4) All official document especially exams and University degrees should be originally in both official languages - English and French.
- (5) We do not want to be considered as second-class citizens. In the case of harmonisation of syllabuses, the new syllabus should be in English and French.

There should be duality of language and not duality of norms. In consideration of the detachment of the administration from students, we suggest that a forum be set up to look into student' problems as they crop up. With due respect to the respective authorities of the Ministry of Education and officiated collaborators, we wish to express our disgust at:

- 1) The over-ambitious attitude of the Secretary General of the Yaoundé University,
- 2) The lack of understanding on the part of the Vice Chancellor,
- 3) The nonchalant and sectional attitude of the Chancellor,
- 4) The quasi ignorance of the Minister of Education and his vice, and the Director and deputy Director of Examinations.

We also wish to express our disgust at the forces of law and order who attacked an unarmed procession of students, and this led to several students being wounded, and to abundant loss of

property. All these points that we have reiterated are meant to draw the supreme Authority's attention to the fact that Anglophones need to be granted their constitutional rights as integrated citizens. We are writing impatiently on Your Excellency for a concrete response in order to resume our classes.

Signed,

The English-speaking Students of the University of Yaoundé

Enclosures

- 1) *A copy of petition submitted by Anglophone students of Yaoundé University to the Minister of National Education,*
- 2) *A copy of letter to the Delegate of National Security reporting victimisation of English-speaking students of Yaoundé University,*
- 3) *A copy of letter to Chief of Station, Radio Cameroon, Central and South Provinces, on the broadcast of false information,*
- 4) *An inventory of loss and damage caused by forces of law and order.*

Inventory of Property Declared Missing

- 1) *23 pairs of shoes*
- 2) *A brief case containing books*
- 3) *Optic glasses of foreign lady student from Burundi,*
- 4) *Several wallets, some containing monies and documents,*

N.B.: A pro-forma invoice stating prices of lost property listed above will be made available to the Chancellor of the Yaoundé University. In addition to the above listed missing articles, there are the hospital bills of students that sustained injuries.

Open Letter to the Cameroonian Patriotic Students of the North West and South West

Who Wants to Use the Anglophones and their Common Culture?

Since the 20th of August, a so-called open letter supposedly written by students of North West and South West Provinces, spreads lies and aberrations, claiming that the Anglophone community is being oppressed and threatening to disturb the security and peace of our United Cameroon. Who therefore wants to use the ideas of belonging to the Anglophone culture and the peaceful Cameroonian of the North West and South West, to carry out unavowed selfish ventures of politicians, some of who mastered the operations from abroad? Every patriotic Cameroonian student who wants to answer this question ought to examine with us the flagrant lies told here and there, and then take stock of the achievements of the Man of the New Deal towards better integration within the diversification of all our ethnic and linguistic communities.

1) *A Long List of Flagrant lies.*

- 1) Demography and the laws of Reason are opposed to any claims of striking a perfect balance between the number of scholarships awarded to students from the North West and South West Provinces, and those awarded to students of the other eight Provinces, unless we want to fall easy prey to demagoguery. However, the patriotic and vigorous action of President Paul Biya refuses all the lies they want to force down the throats of our compatriots. With due respect to those who quote the *Cameroon Tribune* of 19th and 20th August 1985, not only eight new scholarships were awarded to Anglophones. The actual facts correspond to the hope placed on the Man of the New Deal by all compatriots, especially those of the North West and South West. The figures are as follows:

Foreign Scholarship Award to Applicants from West and South West Provinces

Nature of Scholarship	National- Total	NW Total	SW Total	per cent NW+SW
National Scholarship GCE + BAC...	204	60		31
National Scholarship University applicants	50	9		18
Chinese scholarship	55		5	100
Russian Scholarship	87		6	8,95
British Council	25		25	100
Scholarships for Agronomy Abroad	20		20	100
Special Aids USA- Canada	324		259	79,93
Total	695		384	55,25

First Year Scholarship for the University of Yaoundé (1985-1986)

Western Province	543
Centre Province	369
North West Province	206
South West Province	139
South Province	109
Extreme North Province	60
East Province	31
North Province	24
Adamawa Province	11

North West and South West Provinces together received a total of 465 out of a grand total of 1818 scholarships representing 25.58per cent of the total scholarships.

- 2) The present regime has spared no effort to promote

bilingualism. The English language has equal status with the French in the Press and Gazette, as well as over Radio and Television during shows and Official ceremonies. The Head of State inaugurated the era of Bilingual Presidents by speaking both the language of Voltaire and that of Shakespeare; and several of his Ministers are striving happily to follow his example. The present government has set up a committee to study the GCE problem, establish Anglophone schools within Francophone zones, and bilingual colleges in all provincial head quarters. It has also transformed the High Schools to bilingual grammar schools, carried out studies for the improvement of the higher teacher' training school in Bambili, opened the University Centre of Buea as well as creating a bilingual formation centre for civil servants.

- 3) Bilingualism is a vital need in everyday life, as well as in the university. No one can challenge the bilingual structure of I.R.I.C, C.U.S.S., and the Faculties, where courses are offered indiscriminately in both languages. Besides, the number of Anglophone professors in our university institutions is constantly on the increase. Can any Francophone student obtain a degree in law without having mastered the difficult language in the law of Equity, contracts and torts? On the invitation of the present government, a British Council mission has spent two years in Cameroon to promote bilingual formation in our university institutions. And do we doubt of his political goodwill in promoting bilingualism?
- 4) To claim that there has been an attempt to reduce the GCE to a mere local Certificate, is to lend deaf ears to reality. The British themselves have adopted a reform which is very similar to the one proposed by the Ministry of National Education; besides, the tendency in all Anglophone states from Nigeria to Ghana is for a realistic modernisation of the GCE system, while conserving its originality.

It is dangerous that bilingualism serves as a

Trojan horse for the come-back of old politicians. Bilingualism for President Paul Biya, is a source of riches, a requirement to modernisation and a means to participate in the universal civilisation. Pluriculturalism is a component of a true National Integration strategy.

2) *Equitable Distribution of the National Revenue*

1. The unfavourable international economic situation characterised by the world economic crisis has not prevented the growth of our country's gross national product, passing from FCFA 2,500 billions to FCFA 3,060 billions during the year 1983-1984. Such a growth is thanks to the contribution of all the Provinces. Timber, cocoa, coffee, aluminium and cattle, have also greatly contributed to this expansion. Therefore, Cameroon does not live only on petrol revenue, as some claim. And it must be pointed out that petrol has also been discovered on land on the shores of another Province.

All the riches of the country belong to the entire Cameroonian people. The problem is how to share it equitably. Does President Biya do so?

2. The answer of the Cameroonian people is well known. An honourable Fon, eloquently answered this question for his compatriots over the Mungo, in his welcome address to President Biya, during the Bamenda Agricultural Show: "President Biya has done more in three years for the North West, than all that has been done in twenty four years."

Who wants to doubt the statement of an honourable Fon? Not us, especially as the facts corroborate its assertions. The achievements attributed to the man of the New Deal are numerous. The congress hall in Bamenda is a masterpiece offered by the entire Cameroonian people to the North West Province and to Bamenda, added to an impressionable infrastructure which has transformed the small village of yesterday, into a beautiful town of the future. The roads already constructed or those under construction, or those to be constructed in the near future, can no longer be counted: Limbe-

Idenaw, Bafoussam-Bamenda, Kumba-Mamfe, Bamenda-Ekok, Ring-Road, Mamfe-Akwaya. Telecommunications networks have been improved: extension of the Bamenda telephone exchange, new telephone exchange at Mamfe, Telex exchange at Limbe, construction of Television transmitting stations at Bamenda and Buea.

Who then has seen the supposed Ebolowa modern airport, which does not exist?

Health services in the North West and South West, like in other parts of the country, have been noticeably improved. We shall only mention the provincial hospital in Bamenda, the provincial reference hospital in Limbe, the divisional hospitals of Mbengwi, Mudemba and Kumbo, the P.M.I of Mbengwi, the developed health centres of Kombo Abedimo (Ndian), Fubuna and Santa (Mezam) and Ndop (Mezam); the preventive medicine centre of Kumbo (Bui), the Sub-divisional Hospital of Nwa (Donga-Mantung) and the School of Medical Technicians in Limbe (Fako).

As regards Town Planning, studies have been carried out for the construction of urban roads in Mbengwi, Kumba, Bamenda and Limbe. Besides, Limbe and Buea with other centres have been included in the first three years program, for the construction of 9,000 social lodgings. North West and South West have been allocated FCFA 155,000,000 and FCFA 126,700,000 respectively, as part of the budget earmarked for rural development and improvement of village water-systems.

North West and South West have not been excluded in the improvement of educational facilities in the country. The Buea University centre has been in operation since the beginning of the present academic year. Research centres have been established beyond the Mungo. Considerable improvements are to come, and new plans have already been designed, concerning:

- The construction of 6 colleges out of 26 to be built in the whole country;
- 2 technical high schools are to be built;
- 2 teachers training centres, being the only ones to be constructed in the whole country;

Among the major projects for social assistance, the first phase costing 55 million francs has been completed, for the

institute for the blind in Buea.

President Paul Biya keeps to his words. That is why one wonders who propagates blatant lies and cowardly exposes children to public scorn. Who is the accomplice of those enemies of national unity living abroad? Who finances all these tracts? Have some of our compatriots' double faces, saying one thing during the day, and another at night?

They will reap what they sow. This is also true for the politicians. Once more, we remind those of our compatriots who are tempted by adventure, these words of President Paul Biya: "Cameroon shall be united or shall not be?"

Those who artfully advocate the revision of the constitution and the return to federalism forget to tell us that by following them, we will sooner or later demand federalism between the North West and the South West, and that even in the North West we shall ask for another, between the minority Bali and the majority Widikum. The federalism of the old politicians is bankrupt and the first step towards total disintegration.

Those who demand the liberation of Fon Gorgi Dinka, will tomorrow ask that "Ayatollah" and the enemies of national unity be brought back.

University and schools are meant to prepare the future, and should not be the ground for close combats of masked politicians. The Anglophone students of the New Deal call on all their comrades, after this brief joint reflection, to listen to the voice of wisdom - that of work.

The Anglophone Students for the New Deal

Copies to:

- *Political leaders;*
- *Mayors;*
- *Magistrates and Lawyers;*
- *University Professors;*
- *Members of the National Assembly;*
- *Chiefs and Traditional Authorities;*
- *Governors;*
- *Ministers and Directors Generals;*
- *Honourable S.T. Muna, Dr. J.N. Foncha, Dr. E.L. Endeley;*
Mr. E.T. Egbe;

- *Presidency of the Republic;*
- *Secretariat of State for Internal Security;*
- *Ministry of National Defence;*
- *Secretariat of State for National Defence;*
- *National Centre of Documentation;*
- *British Embassy;*
- *Embassy of the USA;*
- *Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé;*
- *Governor of North West;*
- *Governor of South West.*

Chapter Two

The Birth and Struggles of TAC

Jing Thomas Ayeh captures the inevitable defeat of Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe to the Teachers' Association of Cameroon over the GCE, despite the asymmetric power dynamics of the context and the actors.

Jing Thomas Ayeh summarises why in his struggle against TAC over the GCE, Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe was bound to come out, ultimately, the loser. Accordingly, although as Minister of National Education Mr. Mbella Mbappe had all the tools to wage a war against teachers and the Anglophone system of education, his monumental miscalculation was to think that threats, insults and intimidation, would sow panic and confusion among teachers (*Cameroon Post* No. 0191 November 24 - December 1, 1993 p.16). However, the teachers, armed with a long history of militancy, stood firm. Under the leadership of Andrew Azong Wara, Sammy Arrey Mbi, Fodze, Beatrice Wamey and others, Secondary and High School teachers were able to constitute an incredible fighting machine that successfully beat off the first bold incursion of French cultural imperialism into Anglophone life.

Known endearingly as "ballads," teachers best capture the essence of Anglophone society. Humble, polite, neat, determined, God-fearing, law-abiding and hard working, they still represent, for the most part, values on which great societies are built but which are consistently eroded by the excesses of dictators in power. Teachers are a very flexible lot: like chameleons, they are quick to blend into new environments to suit the changing times. They may have their faults but these faults are nothing compared to the havoc wrecked by politicians or soldiers in Cameroon. Even though Robert Mbella Mbappe tried to ridicule and humiliate the Anglophone teachers, they have proven that they are made of sterner stuff. They came, they fought and they conquered.

What follows is the diary of a long struggle by teachers who stood their ground, and ended up as the messiahs, the veritable guardian angels of the Anglophone people and way of life, against Lucifer and his band of fiends.

A quick attempt to situate where the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) picked up the struggle is necessary. *Cameroon Post* (No. 0185 13 - 20 October 1993 p.12, 13 &14) provides a summary of the GCE question as “a chronicle of endless lies and base machinations” thus:

In 1984, a dubious commission of inquiry on the GCE, resulting from stiff Anglophone opposition to a still more dubious reform plan, was created by presidential decree. Led by a Francophone, Professor Joseph Mboui, the team wasted huge sums of money on a tour of Britain, Canada, West Africa and Cameroon. In the end there was neither report nor result. Anglophone parents and children were thus deceived by the Biya government. The result was general apathy and a decline in confidence after the euphoria that saluted Mr. Biya’s coming to power in 1982.

In 1989, Minister George Ngango, another Francophone, in yet another dubious reform package, imposed the Francophone structure of 4 years for the 1st cycle and 3 years for the secondary education upon the Anglophones. Fierce opposition and widespread demonstrations by Anglophone students and parents forced the Biya regime to sack the Minister and halt the scheme. Loss of confidence in government authority increased with this other attempt to destroy the GCE.

A presidential decree, and later a law of 1963 harmonising the Francophone and Anglophone secondary school programmes built on educational authorities drawn from the two systems also provided for a common structure of 5 years for the 1st cycle and 2 years for the 2nd. This was never implemented by succeeding Francophones at the head of national education. Ministers who cannot respect the laws of parliament as in this case, make Anglophones see them as vicious liars and as anarchists who reduce Parliament to a joke of little children. The remark by Minister Gilbert Andze Tsoungui that laws are made by man, when there was an outcry against his abuse of the law during the October 11, 1992 presidential elections, passes as further evidence. The secret agenda to assimilate Anglophones has been their goal. The raging GCE crisis is the result of endless lies and duplicity by the Francophone education Ministers and their government. The University of London was supposed to transfer full control of

the Cameroon GCE to an Examination Board. But for 3 years, the Anglophone search for the Board was hampered by diabolic scheming and succession of unfulfilled promises and deceit. Having lived the experience of such endless lies and deceit, most Anglophones have lost confidence in these Francophone leaders. They are now convinced more than ever before that Francophone education Ministers have a secret plan to destroy the Anglophone system of education which emphasizes pragmatism in all domains, especially the sciences, as opposed to the Francophone love of theory and literary romanticism.

For three successive years, the alarming and unprecedented widespread mess or abuses with the numerous irregularities in the conduct of the GCE exams, by the Department of Examinations in the ministry of National Education, forced Anglophone secondary and high school teachers to form the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), and fight the government-led Francophone crusade against Anglophone education in Cameroon.

As TAC intensified their demand for a credible Examination Board for the Anglophone Examinational system, the Prime Minister, Achidi Achu, created a Technical Committee of education experts made up of mainly Anglophones, to study and make recommendations on the structure, organisation and the operation of such a board. The examiners were promised and assured that this would lead to the creation of the Board to go into operation before the June 1993 GCE Examination session. As a result, the striking examiners assured the marking to a successful finish, of the GCE 1992 exams.

The report of the technical committee with a draft decree containing the aspects of application, submitted in colourful ceremonies to the Minister and then the PM, and was later transmitted to the Presidency for signature. In spite of the three months of tedious work and the colossal sums of money spent, the report and draft decree were ignored in the Presidency. It was clear that the Technical commission was yet another smoke-screen used to lure the examiners to mark the 1992 GCE Exams. The consequence was that the contempt for these Francophone authorities as dubious and morally bankrupt people was further heightened among the examiners and Anglophone parents.

As a counter-action, TAC mounted sustained pressure

which finally forced the Secretary General at the Presidency, Mr. Joseph Owona, to return the draft decree to Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe with instructions for a new plan to deceive. A carefully selected team of ten directors of the MINEDUC, nearly all Francophones was called upon to study or examine the draft decree on the Cameroon Examination Board (CEB) and make recommendations to the Presidency. Note that the PM was ignored in this next phase. Is it not strange or ironic that such an important text drawn mainly by Anglophone experts of education on their own system, should be scrutinized by Francophones? Since most Francophone education authorities with their Ministers never bother to know the Anglophone system, their recommendations were negative, as expected. The result was another base plan namely the signing of a presidential decree creating a GCE Board but trickishly leaving out the aspects of application for a future text. This plan was designed merely to lure the examiners to mark the June 1993 GCE examination and later to be cast away as usual. If not, explain why the aspects of application that the Sondengam Committee had already drawn were carefully shelved for the indefinite future and why the excellent recommendations were ignored?

The above decree was brandished and examiners called for marking by government authorities, CPDM party leaders and the official media. Some dared the examiners to doubt the seriousness of a decree signed by the president. But the examiners saw it as the usual fish hook, since they no longer trust these state authorities including the president of the Republic who thrives on vicious lies and endless succession of unfulfilled promises. The Minister then summoned and addressed GCE moderators and other non examiners and in typical dictatorial style ordered the examiners to mark the examinations in two weeks, starting on the 8th of August 1993. His dictates and authority were ignored because the endless lies had earned him the attributes of a notorious liar, and fake magistrate who had no respect for the truth, regulations or the law, in spite of his advanced age.

When the examiners insisted on the need for the text of application to be signed and a functional Examination Board commissioned first, the Minister lied through the official press that such a complex text would take not less than one year to

prepare. He further remarked on "*Cameroon Calling*" that the decree was long in coming after the Technical Committee ended work because the GCE was not a priority of his tasks. Seeing that his intimidations and orders had failed, the Minister in a new, desperate plan, created an ad hoc committee, mainly of former members of the technical commission, to prepare the text of application as a condition for marking to start. Although progress was hampered by the new members from the so-called presidential majority, the ad hoc committee finished preparing the text in one week, not one year as the Minister had said.

When this other gimmick of using the ad hoc committee to lure the examiners also failed, Robert Mbella Mbappe tried the last scheme. He signed an order making Buea, and Bamenda the only marking centres of the GCE examinations and suppressed that of Yaoundé. As this trick also failed, he grew mad and ordered the transfer of the answer scripts at night by armed soldiers from the Buea and Bamenda centres. Shortly after he lied again that he neither knew nor ordered the transfer. He issued a decision making Yaoundé the only marking centre. By Thursday 16/9/93, it was known that the stolen answer scripts had arrived and were stored in the Geography Department of the University of Yaoundé I. Anglophone parents, the examiners and most Cameroonians were shocked at his mean attitude. How could Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe, who claims he is in charge, steal answer scripts from his own services using armed troops under cover of night! How could he expect examiners and Anglophone parents to have confidence in him when he changes his own decisions at such short intervals?!

Peter Agbor Tabi and a few of his fellow Bayangi tribesmen and post-seeking lecturers, boasted that the Yaoundé University had taken over the marking of the GCE which was to be done by their students. While he was busy offering financial inducements to the students, Robert Mbella Mbappe issued fresh dictates for the examiners to start marking in Yaoundé on 21/09/93. Another Manyu son, the typist turned governor of the South West, like his brother Peter Agbor Tabi, who must protect his post at all cost, intensified his threats for examiners in the Provinces to move to Yaoundé or face the consequences. In fact, the Minister and the PM, Simon Achidi Achu, who blessed Peter Agbor Tabi's plan of action, were counting more on this design

but had to deceive the public by re-summoning the examiners through the usual intimidations that had failed before. It turned out that during the week, more marking was done on radio and CRTV than in the marking centres.

This fact was confirmed even by the crew of *Cameroon Tribune* in their issue of 23 September, 1993. That these Anglophones and many others should be bribed with posts and used as agents by the Biya regime, to facilitate the destruction of the Anglophone educational system, which already enjoys international repute, is nothing short of high treason.

With this summary in mind, let's now follow the struggle through the actions and reactions of TAC.

Frustrated by government's reluctance to create and install an independent Examinations Board to organise and conduct Anglophone examinations in Cameroon, TAC took the initiative to create and install an examination board in Buea on Friday April 16th. The decision was taken in Bamenda, March 18th, 1993 during an enlarged executive meeting of the association. Accordingly, the decision was "necessitated by TAC's commitment to ensure that the Examination Board will have adequate time to effectively handle the 1994 General Certificate of Education Examination." At the end of the meeting, TAC also released a programme for the installation ceremony of the Cameroon Examination Board (CEB) at IPAR (Institute for the Reform of Primary Education) and Printing Press Premises in Buea (*Cameroon Post* No. 154 March 24-31, 1993 p.4 for details). On April 16 1993 in Buea, members of TAC vowed and pledged as follows (*Cameroon Post* No. 160 April 29, 1993 p.12):

Let us take a vow that come what may we shall not retreat from the great journey we have set out on.

Let us take a vow that we shall vehemently refuse to be used as mere tools to destroy ourselves and our noble cause by those who hate us. (Let us not call them enemies for although they hate us, we hate them not).

Let us be aware that though the temptation may be great, it remains a temptation and though the bait may be attractive, it is only bait. Therefore, the fish that gets attracted ends in the hook.

Let us all realize once and for all that the greatest bond

that binds:

1. South Westerners with South Westerners or
2. North Westerners or
3. South Westerner with North Westerners is our common Anglo-Saxon heritage exemplified through our common educational, legal, cultural and social values which differ very much and are superior to the same values on the other side of the Mungo.

In realising this, let us now vow that no one among us shall ever again use the differences that naturally exist between us to sow any seed of disunity among us or fan any emotions that go only to destroy our common hopes and aspirations.

Finally let us pledge our material, financial and above all our intellectual and moral contributions, each and all to the success of our mission.

Let everyone: teacher, parent, student, elite, businessman, contribute now and in future to the great success!

Let us show the world that in Cameroon, there are still honourable and honest people.

Let these vows and this pledge ripple down the great Mount Fako, over the hills, valleys and plains of Cameroon beyond and become our seal!

At the end of the installation, TAC made an appeal for funds and the following declaration:

In the Spirit of the Educational Conference today held; in the Spirit of Honesty and Transparency that we so need, we here launch this BOARD to serve Generations yet to come as an efficient modern organisation, skilled in educational measurement in a changing technology-dominated World.

CEB, our darling child, strive towards maintaining high Academic standards and public Confidence and Trust; Constantly, your goals, let them be to adapting syllabuses so you would Keep abreast with National curriculum And Examination guidelines;

And effort, we pray you would make always to diversify your financial resources without breaching your *Independence*.

Today, 16th April, 1993, CEB, we plant you, in high spirits, do grow and be our final hope.

Nurture in our Sweat and Aspiration that *Generations* yet unborn will grow to adore Your Excellence and *Remember* this

day. In like spirit we here Hail *Anglo-Saxon Education* and bow to our fatherland, Cameroon.

Not long after its birth, CEB was declared illegal by the Minister of National Education, and everything was done to discourage its effective operation. On July 1st 1993 a Presidential Decree creating a GCE Board for O and A levels was signed. TAC accepted this decree in principle on condition that the text of application reflects their aspirations. But this was to take long in coming.

On September 18th 1993, an enlarged National Executive Committee of TAC met in Bamenda and reviewed with dismay, some actions of the Minister of National Education following the presidential decree of July 1st. They released the following explanation and reiteration of their position:

TAC has all along wanted an Examinations Board to cater for all the examinations of the Anglophone school system. After a lot of pressure by TAC and Parents, government was compelled to set up a committee to study and make recommendations on the creation and functioning of the Board. It was only after a series of follow ups and hard pressure by TAC and parents that the Minister of Education forwarded the report with favourable comments to the Prime Minister on the 7th of January 1993.

On the 4th of January 1993, meeting with the National Exco of TAC in Santa, the Prime Minister informed them that the decree creating the Cameroon Examination Board would be signed by the end of February 1993.

By the 16th of April 1993, having waited in vain for the decree, TAC and the confederation of Parents of North West and South West proceeded to install their Examination Board at IPAR Buea which was soon declared illegal by the Minister of National Education. It would be recalled that TAC and Parents were pushed into this action by the frustrating reactions of both the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Education.

Rather, on the 1st of July 1993, a Presidential Decree creating a GCE Board for O and A levels was signed. TAC accepted this decree in principle on condition that the text of application reflect their aspirations as outlined in the Report of the Technical Committee set up by the Prime Minister, and tied the marking of the 1993 end-of-course examinations to the

publication of the said text of application and the installation of the Board in Buea.

A series of intimidations, threats and intrigues by various agents of Government failed to pressurize teachers into marking without their demands being met. Then on the 19th August 1993, the Minister of National Education, addressing some officials of his ministry, members of the Prime Minister's Technical Committee and those of the Final Award Committee, (an audience that was not directly concerned with the actual marking exercise) ordered teachers to proceed to the various centres to begin marking.

The teachers' refusal to obey the order without their demands having been met, resulted in the creation by the Minister, of an ad hoc committee to draw up the text of application to the Decree of 1st July 1993. This Committee was given up to the end of September 1993 to complete its work. In the light of this, TAC made an important concession as contained in their document of 22nd August 1993 p.4 inter alia that:

- the Minister should install as a matter of urgency the ad hoc Committee in Buea;
- the Minister should give the Committee interim powers to oversee the marking and publication of results of the 1993 end-of-course examinations and to proceed with arrangements to handle the 1994 examination under the Board.

This was to give room for marking to start before the completion of the work on the said text of application (since by the Minister's estimation this work was to take six weeks). In his usual bad faith, the Minister ignored this concession.

The concessions thereafter stood withdrawn and TAC was left with no other choice than to revert to its original position, viz, to have the text signed and the Board installed in Buea and seen to be fully operational before any marking could commence.

However, the ad hoc committee completed work on the text on the 13th of September 1993 and handed same to the Minister of National Education on the 14th of September 1993. TAC regarded this as a positive indication that the solution to the impasse was in sight and started to sensitize teachers for the

marking to begin soon.

To our greatest dismay, we learnt that on the very day the committee handed the text to the Minister, the very Minister had clandestinely and in a most bizarre manner, nocturnally carried away the GCE scripts from both the Bamenda and Buea marking centres to Yaoundé. (Around 1 a.m. on 14/9/93, when people of good will were deep in their sleep)!

We are also reliably informed that the decree creating a National Examinations board (Office Nationale d'Examens) with headquarters in Yaoundé is nearly complete. This is meant to complete the imposition of Francophone culture on us, the Anglophones. This is unacceptable and intolerable.

By these acts, the Minister of Education, together with the Prime Minister, have confirmed the bad faith that TAC had all along attributed to them as regards the creation of the Examinations Board.

This has strengthened our resolve to have nothing else but the Examination Board installed in Buea and we expect the whole Anglophone community to stand by us in this patriotic struggle.

In this connection, we are hereby warning non-teachers to keep clear of the marking centres in whatever capacity they may be so tempted to do.

The Minister, by quoting out of context the decree of 1977 intends to massively dismiss Anglophone teachers who, in solidarity with the cause, would disobey orders to go to mark unconditionally in Yaoundé. TAC would like to warn that any such act of intimidation and or victimisation of one teacher would be regarded as affecting the entire Anglophone teaching corps!

To further enlighten the public on this and other issues, the National Executive Committee of TAC will be giving a Press Conference at the Presbyterian Church Centre, Bamenda, on Monday, 20th September 1993 at 10 a.m. Local and Foreign media are invited.

Throughout the struggle, there was no avenue that TAC did not explore: It wrote twice to President Biya, asking him to intervene and save the Anglophone community untold suffering. Here is the second of the letters, which was reproduced in *Cameroon Post* (No. 0186 October 20-27, 1993 p.14):

The President of the Republic,
Yaoundé

Your Excellency,

Earnest Appeal for Intervention

On the 9th September, 1993, we addressed an appeal to you for intervention in resolving the GCE Board crises to permit the marking of the end of course examination for 1993 to take off smoothly. That appeal came in the wake of the mounting frustrations Anglophones parents and their children in this country are being subjected to by the Minister of National Education, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe.

Today, a little over a month later, Anglophones all over the nation are taking to streets as a first step in a series of protests against injustices done to their children and the trauma this has caused them to go through. We will like to draw your attention to the following:

- (1) In installing the Cameroon Examinations Board (CEB) in Buea on Friday, April 16th, after a very highly successful Anglophone Educational Conference, the parents, teachers, students and sympathizers of the plight of Anglophone education in Cameroon noted with dismay that the assurances and promises of Government had come to no avail.
- (2) On 20th July 1993, we met with the North West Parliamentarians in a well publicised meeting and assured them that what was happening with our examination was part of the grand national plan of assimilation of the Anglophones.
- (3) In reacting to a meeting organized by the Minister of National Education on 19th August, 1993, we stated convincingly that there was bad faith on the part of the Minister in resolving the problems plaguing examinations of the English speaking school system. We observed with consternation the Minister's insensitivity to the plight of Cameroonian children as he publicly boasted in that meeting that he had no child studying in any school in Cameroon. On these grounds, we insisted on concrete and definitive

structures to be put in place before any work can begin on the marking of the 1993 end of course examinations.

- (4) Reacting to the nocturnal transfer of the GCE scripts from Bamenda and Buea to Yaoundé on the 14th September, 1993, by the Minister of National Education, the parents considered the undignified act as an outright violation of their fundamental rights and those of their children to freely choose decide on the type and quality of education they want.
- (5) After the creation of the “Office de Baccalaureat du Cameroun” for Francophones, we issued a document in which we viewed the action as a confirmation of the French doctrine of assimilation of the Anglophone culture which is aimed at making nonsense of everything that originate from the Anglophones. We served notice to the public that we intend to fight the cause to a successful end and urged all charlatans, sycophants, boot-lickers, hallelujah politicians, etc, who daily flock to your Palace to sing their Hosanna glorifications, to blackmail us and misrepresent the situation to you as political, to stay out of the way.
- (6) The Cameroon Anglophone Students meeting in Bamenda on the 23rd through 25th September, 1993, in their Second National Convention, stated unequivocally that they are “prepared to defend our Cultural and Intellectual Identity so as to bequeath a Legacy of Hope to our young Brothers and Sisters”.

Your Excellency, we will further like you go know that, in their bid to intervene in this long drawn-out Struggle, the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province addressed a long Memorandum to the Prime Minister and Head of Government in which they found it impossible to express in words the unfathomable depth of shock and utter dismay they felt on learning that, at the dead of night, armed forces carried away the GCE examination scripts from the Bamenda and Buea marking centres to Yaoundé in total disregard of an earlier decision of the very Minister to mark the examination in the Buea and Bamenda centres *Only*.

The Prime Minister then requested the Bishops to arrange a meeting between him and the National Executive of the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), which meeting

was in the Arch-Bishopric in Bamenda and was attended by the Prime Minister, The Minister Delegate for External Relations, The Director of Cabinet in the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretary of State No.1 for Education and a host of other Government officials. While we felt convinced at the end of the meeting that we had come close to a solution, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe in his characteristic manner issued an order the following day, even before the results of the meeting had been made known, asking the marking to proceed under questionable and unacceptable conditions. This is sabotage of the first order. We recall that it is not the first time the Minister has put obstacles in the way of a solution to this problem. Each time we have come close to a solution, he has introduced a dimension that has caused the opportunity to be lost and the stalemate to continue. The stakes Dr. Mbella Mbappe is gambling with are frighteningly high for this nation.

As a follow up of his diabolic intentions, he signed an undated Decision No. 031/C/MINDUC/CAB suspending a National Inspector, Mr. Ngufor Sammy for a fake reason as "manquement grave à ses obligations professionnelles". We know that the real reason for the suspension of Mr. Ngufor is that he refused to collaborate with Dr. Mbella Mbappe in his grand design to destroy our culture. We will like you to know that we shall rise as one man and resist with all our energies any attempts by Dr. Mbella Mbappe or any Minister for that matter, to victimize us. Never before in our over 32 years of reunification have the Anglophones been so provoked as now. In the past three years alone, our students and children have been tortured, maimed and even killed by aggressive forces in the guise of political turbulence. As if this were not enough, the Government through Dr. Mbella Mbappe, has proceeded to implement France's diabolic plan to destroy our cherished Anglo-Saxon culture. We see this as a threat to the unity of this nation. Today's demonstrations are intended to bring to your notice that we shall not allow the forces of Darkness to engulf our culture.

For these reasons and many more, we are addressing yet another appeal to you as Head of State of Cameroon to: proceed to sign the text of application of Decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993, which text we have been told by the Prime Minister is

already on your table; name and install the Chairman and Registrar of the Board in Buea to begin the preparation of the 1994 GCE examinations; stop Dr. Mbella Mbappe from monkeying with the future of our Anglophone culture; order the return of the GCE scripts to Bamenda and Buea where the qualified personnel will determine the extent of the damage caused to them by the Francophone gamblers who Dr. Mbella Mbappe has recruited to mark them and then proceed with the proper assessment in keeping with international norms.

Your Excellency, if Anglophones can abandon the festive mood engendered by the victory of the Indomitable Lions barely one or two days after and take to the streets, then you must appreciate the gravity of the problem. We urge you, therefore, to take your responsibilities before history and rescue the situation.

Believe us to be
Yours Respectfully,
Andrew Azong Wara
National President of TAC

Jay W Berily (*Cameroon Post*, No. 0182, September 22 to 29, 1993 p.6) reported that:

On hearing the surprising information on Thursday 16 September of the nocturnal transfer of scripts from the Buea and Bamenda centres, and of the Minister's reversal of an earlier decision making these two the sole marking centres for the 1993 GCE, TAC President Andrew Azong Wara, immediately undertook to find out the reasons for such an unexpected turn of events. When he contacted Mr. Mbella Mbappe, the Minister seemed as surprised as he was, claiming that he had given no orders for scripts to be moved to Yaoundé. The Minister said if the governors had ordered the removal of the scripts from the delegations, it must have been for security reasons.

It is entirely possible that Minister Mbella Mbappe was telling the truth for reliable sources now say that the brain behind the current centralisation of the GCE in Yaoundé is Peter Agbor Tabi, Rector of Yaoundé University 1. Mr. Peter Agbor Tabi, who is said to have received the blessing of the Prime

Minister's office, has been discretely trying to recruit post-graduate students to mark the examination. He is reported to be using a combination of blackmail and bribes to get his recruits, threatening them with failure and offering financial inducements.

Graduating Anglophone students have been receiving hints that their jobs might be on the line if they do not cooperate with the authorities to mark the exams.

Peter Agbor Tabi, and Peter Abetty, who is coordinating the effort from the Prime Minister's office, might be in for more than they bargained. Bringing the scripts to Yaoundé should have been a very delicate operation but it was handled brutally, reportedly by the ministry. This means the scripts should now be hopelessly jumbled and it requires the skills of a magician and the patience of Job to sort them out again. The scripts that were meant to be marked at the Yaoundé centre got a soaking last Wednesday when heavy rains caused a flood whose waters invaded the rooms in which they were stored at the GBHS Essos. Workers had to break down doors to get at the manuscripts and by the time they were rescued, about 80 of them had been soaked beyond legibility. Some of the scripts were reportedly rescued to the Yaoundé University I, Geography Department, where Rector Peter Agbor Tabi ordered the erection of iron gates across corridors in the dead of Thursday night, September 16, 1993.

It shall also prove devilishly difficult, if not outright impossible, to get people with little or no prior knowledge of grading examinations to do a credible job. Experts and professionals in TAC are now expressing fears that certificates issued after such a shoddy examination would not be recognised anywhere in the world. But even so TAC does not intend to budge from its initial position of a fully autonomous Examination Board. But such a state of affairs does not seem to have bothered the two Peters, Agbor Tabi and Abetty.

...Whatever the case, those who shall hearken to the call of the Peters to mark the exam might be placing themselves in a certain amount of danger. A shadowy, and hitherto unknown body calling itself the Anglophone Freedom Fighter has vowed to take very severe measures against anybody, especially Anglophone, who go against the stand taken by TAC and

Confederation of North West and South West Parents' Teacher Associations.

In a formal reaction on the theft of GCE scripts from Buea and Bamenda, TAC came up with the following statement (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 22-29 September 1993 p.6):

It has come to our knowledge that the GCE scripts from the Bamenda and Buea marking centres have been carried away to presumably, the Yaoundé marking centre.

This action by the Minister of National Education grossly contradicts his own Ministerial Decision read several times over CRTV only a few days ago that the Yaoundé marking centre had been transferred to Buea.

TAC is investigating the reasons behind this new trick by the Minister of National education and will take appropriate action as soon as the facts are available.

We, however, wish to re-iterate the fact that in our Memo of 9th of September 1993, addressed to the Minister of National Education, we intimated that any further manoeuvres and intrigues would only prolong the stalemate.

We have also been informed that the Technical committee completed and submitted to the government the supposed text of application of the decree creating the GCE Board today, 14th September 1993, through the very Minister of Education.

In the meantime we call on parents, students and the general public to stay calm and avoid any form of demonstration both in their interest and in the interest of the course we are all pursuing.

TAC was well aware that if the GCE issue must be resolved in their favour, no stone was to be left unturned. One of the things they did to guarantee this was to expand their constituency by persuading parents and students to support them. This solidarity was felt strongly all over the country, but most especially in Yaoundé and the Anglophone Provinces. And the tackless and clandestine manner with which the government carried scripts away from Bamenda and Buea, turned the public

completely against it and firmly for TAC. In Bamenda, Buea and elsewhere, Teachers, students and parents came out to demonstrate against the government's insensitivity to their plight and to let those in power know that nothing short of an independent board installed in Buea would satisfy Anglophone Cameroonians.

In Bamenda, thousands of demonstrators stormed the Provincial Delegation of National Education to protest the clumsy manner in which the government was treating the Cameroon Anglophone examinations system. The main demands of the demonstrators included the immediate return of the stolen GCE scripts to Bamenda and Buea marking centres, the signing of the text of application to the Decree creating the GCE Examination Board and the sacking of the mainly Francophone teachers recruited to mark the GCE scripts in Yaoundé (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20-27, 1993 p.9).

The peaceful demonstration was sponsored by parents, teachers and students. It was a purely Anglophone affair and persons of all ages and walks of life were involved. The march kicked off at 9 a.m. from the different ends of town - Mile Two Nkwen, Finance Junction, Rendez-vous, Ntarikon Park, Azire, Hospital Roundabout, "T" Junctions, etc. Several groups converged at "T" Junction and trooped into the Bamenda Commercial Avenue en route to the Veterinary Junction where they were to join the demonstrators from "Bagdad" Nkwen before returning to the Provincial Delegation of Education.

This plan was, however, punctured at the SONAC street by gendarmes who suddenly arrived at the scene. A military truck carrying armed gendarmes almost ran over the demonstrators who seemed unshaken by their fierceness. Some gendarmes suddenly scampered off their trucks and beckoned on some persons who were marching in front of the crowd. When they came, they were ordered to mount the trucks. Others were seized violently and squeezed into the waiting trucks.

Meantime, most of the demonstrators who had escaped into the nearby bush paths, soon resurfaced at the "Liberty Square" where an even larger crowd was waiting and chanting slogans. They then turned towards the Delegation of Education and besieged it. When the crowd arrived their destination, the assistant Provincial Delegate of National Education for the North

West Province, Dr. Elango, was standing imposingly on the steps of the office building. His presence signalled a friendly and receptive atmosphere to the demonstrators who almost turned wild on seeing the sea of red berets.

After a few moments of frantic singing, dancing and shouting in the premises of the Education Office, the Education Delegate, Chief Forbuzie Martin Asanji, walked out of his office and met the crowd. He was about to start addressing the crowd when the same military truck carrying those arrested, arrived the scene. There was wild screaming, booing and jeering from the crowd. The Provincial Delegate and his Assistant scurried to the gendarmes who had descended from their truck and were threatening to disperse the crowd. The Delegate and his assistant begged, persuaded and impressed on the men of law and order that force should not be used on the crowd. But the gendarmes who had been let loose would not listen. Instead, the gendarme Commanders and senior police officers accompanying them kept crisscrossing the road with walkie talkies in full blast, shouting orders in French, throwing up their hands angrily and in despair, and deliberately avoiding the Education Boss and his assistant who kept on appealing. Finally, the truck drove off to the station.

Chief Forbuzie Martin Asanji displayed his ability to handle a crowd when for five hours he was "captured and detained" in the baking sun and intermittent rain fall that day. The Chief was not allowed to move out of 60 square cm circumference. Placards were brandished in his face. Some were handed to him on which he was asked to sign his resignation. He was called all sorts of names in songs and slogans. The chief virtually had his longest day - standing on the same spot from 10 a.m to 4 p.m.

It was a difficult moment talking to the crowd. The Provincial Delegate with dry lips attempted to respond to the various questions posed to him. He spoke in pidgin. He promised the crowd he would ensure the release of those arrested. The crowd roared: "Now!" Upstairs, his assistant was negotiating the said release. "All we go stay until they release dem!" he said. The crowd responded: "Yaah, yaah ..."

Chief Forbuzie: "...as I be tell wonna delegation two weeks ago, those scripts dem be takam na under military

conditions.... For text of application, dem don sign'am....I am only a delegate. There are certain things which are above me".

Crowd: "resign, resign.... Mr. Delegate, where is our future?"

Delegate: "It is our future, not only your own. I am asking the same question too". Crowd: "Where are the First School exam papers?"

Delegate: "The papers are with me. Nobody is correcting those scripts anywhere in the Province!"

The Delegate was visibly confident of himself when the TAC President arrived the scene, accompanied by Mr. Arrey-Mbi (Secretary General), Mr. John Fodje Taiti (Treasurer) and one other TAC Exco member. After conferring with the Delegate, the four men went upstairs, discussed in the Governor's Office and finally came out and drove Up-station and met the Secretary General of the Province, Mr. Tanyi Tiku Bayee-Arikai and the gendarmerie Legion commander. A prompt release of those arrested was obtained and they drove down town together.

Back at the Provincial Delegation of Education, Azong Wara in a dark, wet suit, spoke to the cheering crowd and announced the release of all the detainees. He also announced that one of the aims of the demonstration that day had been achieved - the signing of the text of application creating the GCE Examination Board. [The text has since been discovered to be subterfuge - Editor]. He then invited the population to turn out at LCC Mankon where the position of TAC would be made public, in a meeting with parents and North West Parliamentarians. He thanked the population for holding out and advised them to treat the Delegate humanely. The crowd cheered the Delegate and even offered to render him protective escort to his Palace, but the Chief politely turned down the offer.

In Buea, the population came out en masse Monday, October 18, in total defiance of their Governor's radio communiqué threatening hell and death for any one who dared come out to demonstrate, and threatening to suspend salaries of any staff member of the delegation of Education who failed to show up for work (Gideon For Mukai, *Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27- November 3, 1993 p.7).

As early as 7 a.m., teeming groups had gathered at strategic corners waiting for the moment. By 8.30 a.m. the crowd

thickened. It was made up mostly of teachers and students who all marched bravely to the Delegation. The atmosphere was tense. Various radio broadcasts had warned the population not to demonstrate. Nevertheless, the diehards gathered and read their memorandum in front of the Delegation of Education, demanding no resumption of classes come October 21, for the transportation of GCE scripts back to Buea and Bamenda and for the installation of the Board before resumption of classes.

After reading the memo, which was approved by thunderous cheers from the crowd, the branch president of TAC, Mr. Tambe Pius, proceeded to hand a copy of it over to the Provincial Delegate of Education. He was prevented from doing so by insiders who even sealed the door against his entry.

After the refusal, the branch president declared that the object of their mission was achieved and that they will proceed to use any means: fax, telephone or whatever, to keep the Delegate very well informed of their move and their stand.

When the troops (a truck full of gendarmes and police) finally arrived, the crowd was not surprised and while a few scared souls melted away, the vast majority stayed behind, gnashing their teeth at military presence, regretting and blaming Mr. Tambe Pius for announcing the end of the assignment prematurely.

The unabashed flat-feet who had been at the throats of Buea dwellers for well over a month were showed one corner to stand and there they stood for hours under the sun, staring.

According to *The Herald* (No. 060 October 13-20, 1993 p.5), on Sunday October 3 at the Archbishop's house in Bamenda, a tripartite meeting initiated by the Prime Minister between TAC, the government and Bishops of the North West Province, failed to resolve the GCE controversy.

The government delegation, led by Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu had requested Arch Bishop Paul Verdzekov to convene and mediate the meeting because he dreaded a rebuff from TAC.

Although Government Delegation's intention was to "appeal to TAC as brothers to consider to do something immediately towards the marking of the GCE so as to ensure the smooth reopening of schools", TAC responded negatively when its National President, Azong Wara told Mr. Achu that his

association's position had not changed. "Give us the text of application, install the board in Buea, bring back the scripts and we begin marking", said he.

Government hopes appeared to have been dashed when the "uncompromising", but soft-spoken TAC Secretary General, Sammy Arrey Mbi hardened TAC's stand by declaring that if the texts of application do not conform to their demands, "we will even reject the July 1 decree creating a GCE Board, and we shall return to square one."

Events came to a head when Education Minister, Robert Mbella Mbappe issued an ultimatum compelling teachers to report for marking. The Prime Minister is reported to have been very embarrassed by this latest show of force.

Earlier during the meeting, Dr. Peter Abetty, one of the personalities who accompanied Mr. Achidi Achu had painstakingly expressed government's good intentions to publish the text of application of the decree creating an Examination Board. He also exhorted the teachers to accept to mark the scripts in Yaoundé, unique centre for now as a concession.

Another member of the government delegation, Mr. Francis Nkwain was very evasive in his assertions. He held that in every human problem, one may be right or wrong, but in the GCE problem, the question of who is right or wrong should not arise. He pleaded with the teachers to start marking.

Meanwhile, a meeting scheduled by the North West Confederation of PTAs on Thursdays October 7 was blocked by the D.O. for Bamenda Central with orders from North West Secretary General.

On this issue Partrick Ndikum Tanifom (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 29 September 1993 p.8) believes that Government got itself roped in by its own very intransigence and bad faith. In his article titled "The 1993 GCE SAGA: Zero Marking", he wrote:

Going by the spate of confused, contradictory and half-cooked reports churned out on a daily basis by the government media since the GCE imbroglio attained the present peak-point, the government has finally found itself hopelessly roped in by its

own very intransigence and bad faith. And characteristically, the authorities keep on acting the Spartan, not wanting to give in to TAC demands viz: creation of a GCEB which will handle from start to finish exams of the Anglophone educational system, without which, this year's GCE exams will not be marked.

Literally government has exhausted all its baits and today remains, and indeed cuts the perfect picture of scoundrel in the eyes of a thoroughly alienated and generally unsympathetic Anglophone community. And the force of collective Anglophone front in today's Cameroon cannot be underestimated by anybody whose faculties are still intact. That is where TAC can comfortably relax and continue calling the shots.

Shutting their minds completely to whatever direction Francophone thinking or reaction leans, (since according to most of them, Anglophone problems are alien to Cameroon) Anglophones regardless of region, religion, tribe etc, have closed ranks and rallied behind TAC which they see as the most potent force of the moment, that can knock off the shackles of Anglophone cultural assimilation to la République du Cameroun.

In the history of Anglophone agitation against attempts at francophonising their exams, never has there been an avalanche of spontaneous and collective reactions to a related issue as has been the case following the recent night arrest and deportation of GCE scripts from Bamenda and Buea to Yaoundé. The reactions have come in a multiplicity of complexions and tones; and for once, it has become clear that the division between the two Anglophone Provinces was a myth.

It should be noted that with the names of those accepting to do the very dirty job for government becoming public knowledge, general outrage and why not, eventual ostracising may be their lot. And if such fellows either still possess a faltering conscience or still envy the need to enjoy some relative peace, it is everybody's guess what the fate of this present arrangement government circles term marking, would be zero marking!

A list of unauthorised markers was widely circulated in the papers and in the form of tracts, in a bid to dissuade them from continuing with the exercise. TAC warned non-teachers to keep clear of GCE marking. Anyone who persisted was to be treated as a traitor to the Anglophone Cameroonian cause, and should expect to “be punished with the utmost ruthlessness and vigour”.

The following was published in *Cameroon Post* (No. 0183 September 29, 1993 p.8), with promises that it will be updated as the situation developed.

South West Province

No	Name	Station	Subject	Observation
1	Chief Esame Linus Ngalame	Buea	A/L	Anglo
2	Nkale Ekaney Alex	Tiko	“	“
3	Ndemaze Alexander	Bangem	“	“
4	Yong Rudolf Ngong	Bangem	“	“
5	Nsobe E Mzeka	Buea	“	“
6	Ngwese Vincent E.	Kumba	“	“
7	Ako Bisong Felix	Tiko	O/L	“
8	Gobina Fredrick Eko	Mudemba	“	“
9	Minyem Jean Emile	Buea	A/L	Franco
10	Njika Lucas Ivo A.	Buea	“	Presidency
11	Mbeng Samson	Eyumejock	“	Anglo
12	Mejame Epede Charly	Buea	“	“
13	Kenjinmba D Christopher	Buea	“	“
14	Essomba Andre Pascal	Victoria	“	Franco
15	Nso John Agbor	Mamfe	Geo	Anglo
16	Gamon peter	Fontem	“	“
17	Eteki Elame Emman	Tiko	“	“
18	Mbida Mballa Paul	Victoria	A/L	Franco
19	Betow Ebenezer Stanley	Buea	A/L	Anglo
20	John Vakey	Victoria	“	“
21	Njoh Joseph	Buea	F.Maths	“
22	Nana Martin Ngono	Kumba	OL Eng.	“
23	William Mukete	“	-	“
24	Louis Ebeye Ikome	Victoria	OL	“
25	Annie Anna John	“	OL	“

North West Province

No	Name	Station	Subject	Observation
1	Tansida Mbi Sysvester	Bamenda	AL Hist	Anglo
2	Mbuyongha B. Anthony	"	"	"
3	Nana Goerge	Bali	OL Hist	"
4	Nara George Chuwah	"	"	"
5	Suh Luca Amaboh	Bafut	"	"
6	Dr. Matateyou Emma.	Bambili	AL Fren	Franco
7	Seppo Emillinne	Bamenda	"	"
8	Bunde Wedicia	"	Geog.	Anglo
9	Tumi Obed	Kumbo	"	"
10	Ndoping Ivo	Mbengwi	"	"
11	Lumba David	"	"	"
12	Arrey Joseph Agbor	B.	"	"
		Kumbat		
13	Lucy Ngwe Ndifor	Bamenda	OL Fren	"
14	Muh Peter Kusuh	"	Eng	"
15	Manyam Alfred	"	"	"
16	Atembajong Justine	"	"	"
17	Solomon Nde Awantem	"	"	"
18	Enaoku John Asokwi	Nkambe	"	"
19	Ngalame Alphonse	Kumbo	AL Econ.	"
20	Ibu Cletus Aminge	Fundong	OL	"
21	Dr. Njifutie Njikam Ruth	Bambili	OL H.	Franco

Centre Province

No	Name	Station	Subject	Observation
1	Ayissi Ndehfue Leonard	Yaoundé	AL Hist.C	Franco
2	Zatcha Dzekeny	"	AL Fren	"
3	Mvond Celestin Alexander	"	"	"
4	Tomoua Pierre	"	"	"
5	Njiadeu Justine	"	"	"
6	Njiqdeu Christophe	"	"	"
7	Pare Daouda	"	"	"
8	Dome Pierre	"	"	"
9	Mme Nwathoc Yakan	"	"	"
10	Bindzi Jean Marie	"	AL Fren/Eng	"
11	Mme Ndi Zambo Jeanne	"	Fren	"

12	Mba Laurice	"	AL Fren	Nil Anglo
13	Etuge Emmanuel Sale	"	Nil	"
14	Folabit Mathew	"	Geog. Ass Dir exam	Anglo
15	Tantoh Evelyne	"	"	"
16	Mboh Peter Ebanja	"	"	"
17	Manga Francois	"	OL Fren	Franco
18	Ondoa Mbarga	"	"	"
19	Fonkou Joseph	"	"	"
20	Aoh Filles	"	"	Anglo
21	Ayuk Emannuel	Bafia	"	Franco
22	Mme Mfaaa Dede	Yaoundé	"	"
23	Singha Emmanuel	Bafia	"	"
24	Ngwade Yimen	Yaoundé	"	"
25	Rchounte Nduiogoua	"	"	"
26	Signe Joseph	"	"	"
27	Ndoumi Francois	"	"	"
28	Rouly Mbila jean	"	AL Chem	"
29	Mrs. Etende Nee Nkoum M.	"	OL E Lang	Franco
30	Ghaneh Jeanette	"	OL E Lang	"
31	Wawdim Jude	Bafia	OL E Lit	Anglo
32	Gabriel Tum Ngong	Yaoundé	OL Eng	"
33	Nyinying Bridget	"	"	"
34	Abetty Caroline	"	"	"
35	Kometa Elvis	Mbalmayo	"	"
36	Tapcho Abel	Yaoundé	Math	Franco
37	Tatmfo Oliver	"	"	"
38	Noa Noa Charles	"	"	"
39	Tsoumtsa	"	"	"
40	Tabe mores	"	"	Anglo
41	Marie Epie	"	food&nut	"
42	Agbor Bissong Helen	"	OL Biol	"
43	Kimbu Ngem Marie	"	OL Food&nul	"
44	Elsie Tanyi	"	OL Biol	"

Other Provinces

N0	Name	Station	Subject	Observation
1	Penihe Louis	Baham	AL Fren	Franco
2	Tegne David	Bafang		Franco
3	Nguang Alphone	Ngoundere	Geog	"

4	Mandip Tanyi	Maroua	Chem	F North Anglo
5	Etunge Alex Ewang	Bankim	Eng	Adamawa
6	Ndengue Claude H	Pouma	Lit	"
7	Atem George	"	"	Anglo
8	Njike Patrice Nana	"	OL Hist	"
9	Mbeng Jonson	-	-	"
10	Tatang			Franco

In solidarity with TAC, the Union of Teachers of Higher Education questioned why a functional examination board to take care of all Anglophone examination cannot be given the Anglophones, if that was what they wanted for the stalemate to be broken. Through the permanent secretary Johnny B. Fonyam, the declared (*Cameroon Post* No. 183 September 29 - October 6, 1993 p.11):

The GCE stalemate between the Government and the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) has been going on for about three months now.

On the 10th of September 1993, the government gave the impression to the Cameroonian Public that the GCE Tussle was about solved when the Honourable Minister of National Education signed a decision assigning the marking of the 1993 GCE to the Buea and Bamenda centres only. Barely six days later there was volte-face bringing the marking to the Yaoundé centre exclusively; even more bedevilling was the fact that prior to this swing back decision, precisely on September 14th 1993, the GCE scripts had been clandestinely transferred from the Buea and Bamenda centres to Yaoundé.

The question then is, is this a show of force by the state or simply a manifestation of government weakness or incompetence? Your guess is as good as ours!

Cameroon is a bi-cultural country. TAC has recommended the creation of a Cameroon examination board which recommendation has been endorsed by all Anglophone parents. In the bid to respond to this non negotiable demand by TAC, the government signed a decree creating a GCE examination board but deliberately withheld the text of application. TAC reiterated its stand not to mark until there is a functional examination board. In lieu of dialogue and

negotiations, the government suddenly opts for a course of action to whip up Anglophone tempers. Is it that this government enjoys grappling with tension and explosive situations? Having taken the right course on the 10th of September, why not keep to its word? Certainly, we must be operating under a jungle administration. The Anglophones want a functional examination board to take care of all their examinations, why not give it to them? The Honourable Minister of National Education's decision of 16th September has remained incomprehensible and left every right thinking Cameroonian spell bound.

We the teachers of Higher Education, acting through SYNES, and in full knowledge of what the GCE is, and entails, do solemnly state our position here that the way forward is for the government to grant the functional examination board which is the crux of the matter and above all, ensure that the marking and the publishing of the GCE results is commensurable with the credibility attached to the GCE certificate.

Such support as the above from Synes, was always most welcome by TAC. For, in its struggle with the government, TAC needed every support it could muster, imagined or real. It is in this light that the following reaction to a TV documentary, "The Burston Rebellion", programmed by Anne Nsang, was taken as a sign of her support for TAC and solidarity with the beleaguered Anglophone community. According to Mr. Mfonyam Samuel Nub'asi (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 22-29 September 1993 p.5) in an article titled: "*Between A Rock And A Hard Place*", whether the film was deliberately programmed to boost the TAC fight or it was a happy coincidence, I still doff my hat to Mrs. Anne Nsang.

The documentary in question tells the story of a couple that is recruited to run a parish school in rural England around 1917. The couple wants to introduce modern teaching methods prevalent in the rest of the country but is opposed by the rector of the parish and the parish council. But they persist in other attempts, such as building self esteem and pride in peasant children. Infuriated, the rector and his council falsely accuse the

couple, Tom and Kitty Higdon, of physically abusing two orphans and give them their marching orders. Their pupils rebel and go on strike. Their parents join them with enthusiasm but the parish council refuses to relent. The parents, teachers and pupils are harassed and intimidated but they also refuse to give in. They set up a school on the village green then move, eventually, into a disused carpentry workshop before they finally build their own school house. At its inauguration, Kitty Higdon quotes a passage from G.K Chesterton which ends with the lines:

“We are the people of England
That have never spoken yet
We are speaking now”

The strike lasted 25 years and the amazing thing is that the film is based on real events.

Mr. Mfonyam makes this analogy: Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, the Education Minister is caught between a rock and a hard place. The rock is Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu and his acolytes Peter Abetty and Peter Agbor Tabi, whose Machiavellian machination with the examinations board issue has served as cement in binding the Anglophone community inexorable force fighting for its very existence. The hard place is the Teachers’ Association of Cameroon (TAC) backed up by practically all Anglophone parents, teachers and students. And when the irresistible force of the rock meets the immovable object that is TAC and the Anglophone community, Mbella Mbappe shall simply be astonished.

And if Achidi *The Rock* and his minions by some miracle survive the collision they shall only be maimed spectators to the battle royal that shall ensue between what is derisively known as the “tiny” Anglophone minority and the combined forces of “la francophonie”. If we lose I would be mightily amazed, for God always helps the small beast that is fighting for the life of its young against a marauder, even if the marauder is a Lion Man.

When Mrs. Higdon, the school mistress asked her colleagues of the PTA how long they were willing to hold out against the parish authorities, one grizzled farmer replied, “Until the crack of doom, madame”.

Yes, Anglophone parents, teachers and students, let us all hold out *Until the Crack of Doom*.

The creation of a Baccalaureat Board offered *The Herald* (No. 060, October 13-20, 1993 p.4) the opportunity to whip up Anglophone sympathies for TAC. In an article titled "GCE: Monkey Work, Baboon Chop", the paper argued:

Never before has this common pidgin expression been more clearly manifested than in the recent creation of the Baccalaureat Board. After 3 years of bitter struggle by the Anglophone "monkeys" for an Examinations Board the Francophone "baboon" just obtained its own on a golden platter. Once again the new deal government has proven that it is a champion of misplaced priorities and has gone all the way to give the frogs an "Office du Baccalauréat" for which they have never expressed any need and which means absolutely nothing to them completely. How will they value it when they don't need it and have never asked for it? How will they not embezzle all the tax payers' money that will be put at their disposal as subvention to run the strange board? It is like a golden ring on a pig's nose.

We Anglophones have been provoked by the creation of the BAC Board and we don't have to take things lying low. Let us rise like one man and give TAC our support. We shall have our Exams Board installed in Buea come rain come shine. The Board must be autonomous with no frog interference at any level at all. Let us refuse that National exams board which the government wants to create as an umbrella to the GCE and BAC Board that it has created. So to all Anglophones both at home and in the Diaspora: Get up, stand up for your right; don't give up the fight.

A lotta Continua...

The need for Anglophone unity over the GCE crisis notwithstanding, there was much to amply illustrate the fact that Anglophones were far from unanimous in their endorsement of the tactics adopted by TAC and the Confederation of Anglophone Parent-Teacher Associations of Cameroon (CAPTAC) in the struggle. The following communiqué is a case in point (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 September 29-October 6, 1993 p.15):

In an emergency meeting held by Parents of the North West Province today, Monday 20th September, 1993, it has become crystal clear that all the present ghost associations

coming up are nothing but the SDF portraying itself with her numerous diabolic plans in various faces and forms. From all indications it is now clear that the Cameroon Anglophone Movement, the Freedom Fighters for the Liberation of Anglophones, the Teachers Association of Cameroon, TAC, the Confederation of PTAs and all the likes are all SDF militants continuing in their vain and inhuman attempts to bring trouble and disunite this our beloved country, Cameroon. It is now clear that all these so-called ghost groups which are constitutionally illegal are struggling to distort and destroy our prosperous country. It is quite clear today that we can never separate the leaders and members of these illegal associations, which have as their missions the distortion, jeopardising and poisoning of the minds of the peaceful Cameroonians from SDF.

It is now known that the SDF is using these groups to prolong her policies and to sustain her feeble and ailing attempt to disunite Cameroon. Yes, this is true!

Why is it that John Fru Ndi can only come up now on behalf of his party, the SDF to be recognizing socio-political groups and even writing a letter on the examination issue?

It has now been realised that the SDF is the one continuing with her policies of *Boycott*, as she did with the Tripartite talks, parliamentary elections, revision of the Constitution and now the marking of our dear children's examinations. It is surprising that John Fru Ndi is making reference in his press release of 18th September, 1993 to the resolutions of the Tripartite Talks when he was not even a participant or a signatory at the *Talks* or even giving his unflinching support to the *Teachers Association of Cameroon* (TAC). Thanks be to Ndam Njoya who signed and was accused of taking bribes!!!

Why is it that you people of the SDF do not have the least trust in your Leaders? You appointed Carlson Anyangwe to the Presidential Election Counting commission and when he realised that his *Chairman* was failing, he *boycotted*. But he was accused of taking bribes.

Ben Muna in his attempts to correct the errors of the party was impeached, sacked and accused of taking a bribe of 13 billions from Biya's government. Oh!

Now Azong Wara, whom the SDF sent as the Leader of

TAC and who had been struggling like Ben Muna to improve our educational system has now been accused of taking bribes and accepting a compromise between TAC and the Ministry of National Education, to be made provincial Delegate of Education in the East Province as compensation. This is spear headed by who - one Mr. Mfonyam Samuel who is the SDF district Coordinator of Bafut Sub-Division. Mr. Mfonyam, we know you right from CPC Bali where you were the Principal and main instigator for revolutions and it is really surprising that you are still in active service in the government. By the way who are the signatories of the press release by the so-called confederation of the PTA of the North West Province? Who ever elected them as our representatives? How can we separate Mr. Mfonyam Samuel, Mr. Mancho John, Mr. Akomche, J.A., Mr. Fonso P.C, Mrs. Mafor Rose, Barrister Abongwa Simon Ngu, Mr. Nicholas Ade Ngwa etc. from the SDF? Are these people not the very strong and staunch promoters of the SDF in Mezam?

We the parents of this peaceful North West Province condemn in very strong terms the attitudes of these people and we commend the moves taken by the government to protect our children's scripts, as plans were under-way to burn these scripts at the Bamenda and Buea marking centres (!)

Signed:

Hon. D.A ATIA, Hon, John Tatah, Hon. S.K.B Nuoh, El. Baba Shouaibou
Mrs. Mofofor (MDR), Dr. S. Tita (CPP), Mr. Musi (CNP), Mr. Ambicham
Nenedict, Mr. Muenyi Triya Mathias, Mr. D.N.S. Mofofor.

Done at Bamenda this 20th Day of September 1993.

This communiqué and similar declarations by pro-CPDM Anglophones, were heavily criticised in the Anglophone press. Some opinion saw the North West parliamentarians as doing everything to thwart "any genuine action of reform geared towards the betterment" of their Anglophone brethren. These "unrepresentative" parliamentarians were nicknamed "Honourable Cocoyams", and charged with "hailing the government for having taken security measures to rescue GCE scripts from fire", at a time when "good-will Anglophones" were "struggling to revitalise the educational system of their children

under the vanguardship of TAC." They were castigated for their September 22 declarations against the press release of PTA, TAC, CAM and SDF, criticising Minister Mbella Mbappe's insensitivity to the plight of Anglophone parents and children. "Honourable flock of sheep, the bitter truth, I believe you are very aware of is that, if the entire North West inhabitants (your respective families inclusive), were to have your heads and those of other black-leg Anglophones (the large bald skull of the laughing horse), no one would regret or sympathize for having lost anybody." (Ben Nobel Wobbitiah, *Cameroon Post* No. 0184, 6-13/10/93).

The general opinion was that, in spite of the noble struggle by TAC and CAPTAC, some parliamentarians, local politicians and unfortunate illiterate traditional rulers were also being used to facilitate the destruction of the GCE. By condemning TAC in party meetings, they were allowing themselves to be manipulated by the assimilationist Francophone government. Many of them were seen as ignorant of these facts, while some were just ill-equipped to understand complex educational issues and the others were simply chasing after personal interest. Stage-managed television shows by a handful of misled Anglophone chiefs and politicians against popular Anglophone noble cause, amused the Francophones who use them in the dubious scheme of divide and rule.

Some commentators singled out for castigation those South West chiefs and North West Fons who visited Unity Palace at the heart of the GCE imbroglio and congratulated President Biya for doing his best to resolve the matter. The critical public did not appreciate what they considered to be an implicit or open criticism of TAC's hardline position. Commenting on this in *Cameroon Post* (No. 0184, 6-13/10/93 P. 14), Peter Vakunta described them as 'leaders' "totally robbed of the esteem their subjects owe them", as having got themselves "shamelessly garbed... in the regalia of perpetual mendicants", and as being "experts at power jockeying and petty feuds" or "political chameleons and barefaced bootlickers." He showed total disappointment with "these counterfeit chiefs and fons" whose only concern seems to be limited to "magnifying their epicurean and pecuniary urges."

It should be noted, some argued, that the 2000 trained

regular examiners were almost all members of TAC. As teachers, examiners and educationists, they were more competent as professionals to advice on their domain and the imminent destruction of the Anglophone educational system than the politicians and unfortunate illiterate chiefs who are lured with envelopes and paraded on CRTV. The examiners were themselves parents with children also facing this imminent ruin from the Biya regime. Their strikes were in every way legitimate and supported by all Anglophone parents, with all the educated ones, except, of course, those seeking to protect their posts by pretending that the cause of TAC was political. If government had a good plan on the GCE, it should most easily have convinced the 2000 Anglophone examiners, with their exclusive monopoly of campaign through the radio, television, official written press, the administration, Minister, politicians and the armed forces.

Seriously hurt, Anglophone parents were in pain to find Prime Minister Achidi Achu, some Anglophone Ministers and parliamentarians, and other post-seekers and holders, who had allowed themselves to be used as agents in the destruction of the future of over 4 million Anglophones, because of posts and personal interests. The GCE question, it must not be forgotten, was the repository for our cultural survival and existence and, and should not be used for personal political ends by whoever. To do this was to be guilty of high treason. The lies therefore, that examiners were being manipulated by certain political parties, were the usual pretexts to justify the hidden agenda of the authorities in place. The examiners were mature adults and parents. They were capable of independent noble thoughts, and to fight to save something in which they believed, they needed to be manipulated by nobody.

On his part, Taadom Sultan (*Cameroon Post* No. 0184 6-13 October 1993 p.4) concentrated his attack on "those so-called leaders from the North West" - CPDM chiefs and militants who commended the measures taken by government in seeking lasting solutions to the GCE problem. "May they be reminded that the most recent measures involved state burglary of (nocturnal breaking and entering, severely punishable under the law) and the transfer of scripts from Buea and Bamenda to Yaoundé, the publication of "ghost lists" of willing markers in

which inexperienced students and Francophones are in the majority, and finally the sudden creation of the unnecessary "office de Baccalaureate" which the Francophones are presently pondering how on earth they are going to manage.

Our chiefs condemn those whose intolerance and impatience have led them to equate dissent with treachery. Yet when people whose tolerance and patience have been exploited for 32 long years, turn around and ask for a free hand in the running of their lives, the chiefs label them as secessionists and traitors.

In their resolution, they equally called on all English-speaking Cameroonians not to apportion blame and self-righteousness with matters that go beyond party politics. In the same vein, they apportion blame to TAC, ACC, CAM, Teachers Association (and the ring road?) as wings of the SDF being used to bring disunity to the country.

They end by urging Biya to continue to work for peace, dialogue and reconciliation; reconciling what, for what reason and with whom? It is a real shame that traditional rulers who should spend more time pouring libations and praying to ancestors for the liberation of their subjects should file in to the presidential palace, cap in hand, and remind our very oppressor of the so-called "dangers to which they (the oppressed) are unnecessarily exposing the Cameroonian fatherland".

May be we should seriously start thinking of choosing these chiefs through the ballot box. Then, may be they will know where and when to put their mouths."

The pro-CPDM Anglophones, the leaders most especially, were seen to be threatened by the solidarity among Anglophones over the GCE crisis, and that they would stop at nothing "to shatter the powerful Anglophone coalition and the strengthening bonds that seemed to be forming due to the GCE issue." (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 September 29 - October 6, 1993 p. 14)

Also singled out for criticism were Drs. Peter Abetty and Peter Agbor Tabi who were both accused of trying to recruit "ghost" and unqualified markers, and of working against Anglophone interests and aspirations. Dr. Peter Agbor Tabi was said to have deliberately done everything to thwart debate on the GCE during a SWELA meeting in Yaoundé. "It was revealed

during the meeting that Rector Tabi signed out 600 million FCFA from government to conduct the previously boycotted correction of GCE scripts. His wife was also reported to have received a huge cut of 22 million FCFA to make identification badges for 'the Mbella Mbappe markers.'" (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 3-10 November 1993 p. 21)

In fact, Peter Agbor Tabi and Peter Abetty were seen as traitors to the Anglophone cause. For to have dared to collude with the Minister in recruiting unqualified Francophones to ruin the GCE scripts in the name of marking, was a crime beyond pardon in the eyes of Anglophones of decent standing. For how could they pretend to ignore the well-known fact that although Francophone Ministers and other Francophone officials in the Ministry of National Education do not bother studying the Anglophone system of education, they claim that they can prescribe reform packages and evaluation methods for it? How could they be so treacherous not to correct the Minister or whoever dared to be as crazy as to compare the marking of the GCE to the marking of the BACC and Probatoire. Didn't they know that: "The scope and very long duration of courses and complex evaluation methods make even University lecturers incompetent to mark the GCE?" Could they have forgotten already that: "Sometimes in the eighties, some Francophone National Pedagogic Inspectors were selected to mark the GCE Examination in Chemistry, Maths, Biology and French etc, at the "A" Level", but that "After barely three days, two of them abandoned the marking complaining that it was difficult, too demanding and complicated?" If they knew all this, how then could they have been so callous as to proceed to recruit "untrained adventurers" or mercenaries, to mark for money what they don't understand? Having a degree in a subject does not automatically qualify one to be an examiner in the GCE course. Teaching experience, trial marking and training are needed before one is selected. The Peters and their acolytes know this very well. Thus only post-seeking and selfish ambitions could have led the Peters to initiate and promote this vicious propaganda against the Anglophones. A few Anglophone educationists, knew very well that this evaluation process concocted by the Peters and prescribed by the Minister, defy international norms and the high quality of evaluation for

which the GCE is renowned, but, feared to say so because of their posts and grumble behind closed doors.

These egocentric players are not seeking genuine solutions to the GCE marking problem. They were using it either to earn posts, promotions or maintain themselves in posts held. Their propaganda stressed that the striking examiners wanted only their money accrued marking fees. They deliberately ignored the commitment of the examiners led by "TAC" to eradicate the widespread abuses in the conduct of the GCE by Exam Department. The creation of a functional Exam Board for all Anglophone examinations, as the real solution for these abuses, was down-played in the political propaganda against "TAC". Posts, Blackmail, intimidations and financial inducements are now devices used to hook individuals to destroy the Anglophone system of education once and for all. Nevertheless, these worthless certificates are frightfully abhorrent to Anglophone parents and children.

Reports like the following, only further hardened Anglophone ill-feeling against the Peters, the PM and every other person of prominence seen to be overtly pro-government in his statements on the GCE problem (*Cameroon Post* No. 0185 13 - 20 October 1993 pp. 12, 13 &14):

In total defiance of all the calls from the entire Anglophone community to solve the GCE examinations' problem, the Minister of National Education, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, with the full complicity of the Minister of Higher Education and the Rector of the University of Yaoundé I, Dr. Peter Agbor Tabi, and with of course, the direct instructions of Mr. Simon Achidi Achu, Prime Minister and head of government on the 6th October, 1993, proceeded to:

1. Create a permanent committee most of whose members are Francophones and whose duty is to do everything possible to ensure that the marking takes place by any means. The members of that ad hoc committee appointed by Decision No. D29/CAB/MINEDUC of the 14th of October were: Yungha Teghen (chairman), Mme Tokpanou (Vice chairman), Mme Andela (member), Mr. Folabit Mathew(member), Mr. Felix Mapenyya

- (member), Mr. Ngongkum John (member), a representative of the Minister of Higher Education and a representative of the Director of ENS as members.
2. Recruit unqualified and untrained Francophones to mark the GCE 1993 examinations scripts. Unemployed University of Yaoundé students were the targets. A clandestine committee has already been set up by Peter Agbor Tabi to take care of the exercise.
 3. Distribute examination scripts to these unqualified and untrained Francophones who have already started marking French and Mathematics.
 4. Coerce ENS and University students who happen to be in the neighbourhood of any marking centre to sign for and collect examination scripts for marking.
 5. Replace all qualified and experienced Anglophones, for example, the Lycée Bilingue Essos centre, where the chief of centre and the head of secretariat have been replaced by Francophones.
 6. Order principals of all high schools to forward the Mock GCE 1993 O and A levels result with the clear intention of publishing them as GCE 1993 results.
 7. Suspend Mr. Ngufor Sammy, the National Inspector of Mathematics and Assistant Moderator for Mathematics and Further maths for three month for refusing to collect examination scripts and distribute to unqualified and untrained Francophones to mark.

The above actions are a clear violation of international norms that guarantee the authenticity and recognition of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations and the total disregard of rules and regulations on the GCE Examinations established by the Cameroon government.

It is a travesty that professional teachers and trained examiners should teach programmed courses for certification and at the end, the evaluation is done by student and many others who did not teach such courses. The recent decision of the Minister of National Education whereby students adventurers of the Yaoundé University and others from diverse sources (most of them Francophone) have just been recruited to mark the June 1993 GCE Examination scripts, is the scandal of the decade.

This has triggered widespread anger in Anglophone

Cameroon. The love for quality education in Anglophone Cameroon is too strong as seen from the enormous sums of money spent by parents for their children's education. There is no reason whatsoever, for the Minister to allow extreme emotions rather than reason, to carry him into such a wild and destructive decision involving the destiny of over four million Anglophone parents and their children. A dangerous situation is building up and gathering momentum rapidly.

For their schemes to work, the Minister and his acolytes had to single out and punish some scapegoats. It wasn't difficult coming by these scapegoats or finding the motives to sanction them. The newspapers echoed the story of such victims like Ngufor Sammy and Mrs. Lydia Effimba, who either lost or were suspended from their positions in the civil service because of their commitment to the Anglophone way of life. Mrs. Lydia Effimba, chief of the Bilingual High School Yaoundé GCE marking centre and one of the National Inspectors of Education, was according to *Cameroon Post* (No. 0184 October 6-13, 1993 p.11), relieved of her functions as principal of the Bilingual High School Yaoundé, on Wednesday September 29 1993, because of her radical criticism of Minister Mbella Mbappe and his acolytes for wanting the GCE to be marked by unqualified mercenaries under unacceptable conditions. To her, the GCE was not to be marked unless TAC was granted the autonomous examination board and text of application it was asking for.

Mr. Sammy Ngufor, an inspector of mathematics at the Ministry of National Education, was suspended for 3 months on October 1, 1993 by Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, for having repeatedly defied the express and urgent Ministerial instructions to sign out GCE Mathematics scripts and pass them round for marking. The Postman (*Cameroon Post* No. 0185 October 13-20, 1993 p.5) tells us that following this singular act of public defiance and insubordination, "Mr. Ngufor was frog-marched out of the Ecole Normal premises by armed gendarmes with the warning from the outraged Ministers, never to set foot in the place again, still ringing in his ears." The paper then proceeds to tell us to expect to see many more Ngufors, given that we are dealing with a government that prefers vengeance to justice:

"In fact, what happened to Sammy Ngufor might turn out to be quite mild if other indications are anything to go by.

For instance, on Saturday October 2, the wife of George Nditafon, who is TAC coordinator for the Centre Province, was thoroughly shocked when a black Mercedes car disgorged a group of sinister-looking French-speaking men on her doorstep, who expressed an urgent interest in discussing an unnamed subject with her husband. The wife knew that George, who can just barely afford fuel for his aged Peugeot 504 has no acquaintances driving Mercedes cars and speaking only French. Fortunately, George was attending the meeting that TAC, the PM and the Bishops of West Cameroon held in Bamenda on October 3.

“Still on Friday October 1 CRTV’s Julius M. Wamey was approached by a Francophone police commissioner who also expressed an interest in discussing TAC and GCE problem with his wife, Beatrice. Losing his temper, Mr. Wamey refused the request and threatened the policeman with dire personal consequences should anything happen to his wife or any of their children. Mrs. Wamey is an outspoken executive of TAC, known affectionately as Mme TAC and teaches at GBHS Essos.

And so it goes. Those are all people who have decided to put their actions where their words are: people who have the courage of their conviction, who are willing to sacrifice their comforts and livelihoods to ensure a better future for all our children. With such people among us, we can have only contempt for those who are collaborating with our Francophone persecutors in the ongoing attempt to ruin our cultural identity. These supposed Anglophones, most of them with no prior experience in marking the examination and who are currently helping their Francophone masters to ruin the GCE scripts, are guided by no other instincts than the gnawing pangs of greed. They are protecting the same kind of posts that Sammy Ngufor gave up so gladly, contributing in his own small way to save our culture from extinction, the future of our children and Anglophone pride. If there were one hundred Ngufors, the fight would have been won by now.

And lest I forget, my wife has asked me to tender a standing invitation to Mrs. Ngufor which states that as long as she (my wife) still has a job, Mrs. Ngufor is welcome to share the contents of our freezer. With many more such offers, the Ngufors shall not starve.

There was also concern amongst Anglophones as rumour indicated that the Minister and his acolytes had succeeded in convincing some GCE moderators and Chief examiners. In a letter published in *Cameroon Post* (No. 183 September 29, 1993 p.10), Mr. Janivarius Nkwaibo Tabi, writing on behalf of the confederation of Anglophone Parents, Yaoundé, appealed to them not to facilitate the task of the Francophone oppressor:

We understand that you are presently organising the marking of GCE examination scripts. As Southern Cameroonians we know you also understand the value of the GCE to us and therefore the reasons underlying TAC's struggle.

We, the Confederation Anglophone Parents, Yaoundé, trust that as Southern Cameroonians you will not be assisting La République du Cameroun in destroying our GCE system, the basis of our cultural identity.

We therefore solemnly appeal to you all and individually in the name of our future generations and that of Southern Cameroons to immediately desist from any form of assistance or activity that may compromise the position and struggle of Southern Cameroon parents and TAC.

Remember that we, the people of Anglophone Cameroon have mutually pledged to each other, our lives, wellbeing, property, careers and freedom (Buea declaration).

So as Anglophones became more and more embittered that an alliance of amateurs and adventurers had coalesced in conspiracy to ridicule them, they employed every tactic and strategy that they could think of in their fight back. One concerned parent, J.S. Dinga (*Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27-November 3, 1993 p.2), dismissed the Francophones as unqualified to mark the GCE. He used the tricky nature of the English language to dismiss any of "our Francophone brethren" who would like to pass for an expert: They should be reminded that:

"1. The accepted plural of goose is geese, that of tooth is teeth, but that the plural of booth (like voting booth) is certainly not teeth; nor is the plural of moose meece. Similarly, the plural of louse is accepted as lice, that of mouse is mice, but then when it comes to house, the plural is obviously not hice, nor that of owl ice, not of ounce ainze. Very illogical isn't it?

2. In conjugation, it is generally accepted that the past participle

of spin is spun, of ring is rung, of sing is sung and so on. But then "skun" is definitely *Not* the past participle of skin (like to skin an animal). Also, while hatched is perfectly all right as the past tense of hatch, patched that of patch and latched that of latch, it will be slightly less than an abomination to say that "caught" is the past tense of catch.

3. In the Queen's language (Shakespeare's if you care), players are people who play, writers those who write, killers those who kill, embezzlers those who embezzle, voters those who vote and so on. But then one needs to watch out for words like grocers because these certainly do not "groce" any more than do fingers fing or hammers ham.

4. If our new generation of markers accept "twins" rather than babies as the plural of the English word "baby", then they shall have hurt more than one innocent Anglophone child and this cannot certainly augur too well for this our problematic experiment if national cohabitation, otherwise called national unity.

The attempt to destroy the GCE was situated by some Anglophones within the global context of French efforts to curb the spread of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Londi Frederick for example, recognises this, but argues reassuringly that this assault on the Anglo-Saxon way of life is an exercise in futility (*Cameroon Post* No. 0189 November 10 - 17, 1993 p.14). According to him:

The greatest folly of the century was the French President's issue of a document to be signed by member states of the Francophonie during the last Summit meeting of that organisation's Heads of state that took place in Port Louis in the Mauritian Island. This document had as objective to fight against the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon culture seemingly spear-headed by the United States of America. To put it in his own words, member States of the Francophonie have to be offensive and aggressive towards American expansionism. He also pointed out the fact that many French-speaking countries including France herself act and think American. These utterances coming from a president whose language is supposedly diplomatic language are very undiplomatic. If American led Anglo-Saxon culture has gradually gained ground, it is not as a result of any loud-mouthed avowal of their diplomatic prowess, but through a

subtle but virile diplomacy. Let's come down to facts. Why is French culture on the decline? I will tell you. The French culture which proved dynamic during the colonial era in Africa only went a long way to deracinate and alienate the African from his cultural heritage. Their system of education produced only pseudo-academicians who hitherto have not been able to grapple with academic matters. The consequences of the French culture in Africa are very devastating in that these African countries which were colonised by France, are still suffering under the yoke of French exploitation and domination. These countries gained independence from France through very bloody confrontations with the French.

Those of the countries which gained independence are still suffering from the dubious economic links that bind these countries to France. A glaring example is the Franc zone countries which have been rendered bankrupt by French duplicity and intimidation. Contrariwise, there is the American-led Anglo-Saxon culture which has gained ground in most if not all French-speaking countries.

If the French want to know and I believe they know why the Anglo-Saxon culture takes them out by a long rule, they should revise their policies (especially economic policies) towards the African countries with which they have dealings.

How do the French expect that a culture which provides for freedom of thought and expression should not be accepted globally, while that which inhibits thought and expression be accepted? The French President's plea for French-speaking African Caribbean and Pacific countries to sign a document in which they accept to fight American expansionism may be seen as death to these countries because they will continue to see themselves exploited and plundered by France. This document may be seen as a ploy by France to keep these countries out of the lime-light of democracy and development, for I cannot imagine how these countries as poor economically as in technology can be pitted against the United States. One may also say that signing the document is a subtle way of enabling these impoverished countries to accept French goods which have suffered from dumping as a result of opposition calls for the boycott of French goods in some African countries notably in Cameroon. Those countries whose presidents appended their

signatures on such a document have declined from being francophonie countries to francofolie countries. I am all the happier that at one moment in his life time Dr. Paul Biya was suddenly inspired and he refrained from signing the document.

The glimmer of hope from Biya's decline to sign the document notwithstanding, Anglophones interpreted Minister Mbella Mbappe's war against the GCE, as the translation at a national level of the French cultural crusade against the Anglo-Saxon educational system. "Mr. Mbella Mbappe is toying around with the GCE because it is an Anglophone exam. Mr. Mbella Mbappe must have "orders from above" to make sure Anglo-Saxonism and Anglophones disappear from these shores. Anglophones in Cameroon are being marginalised, annexed, assimilated and gradually annihilated because it has always been on the hidden agenda of the French and local "Frenchman" to go to war against Anglo-Saxonism. The war is declared. Let it be fought and may the better man win.

But let us (as Anglophones) spell it out to Mr. Francis Mitterrand and the likes of him (Mbella Mbappe, Biya etc) Anglophones will fight on land, in the air, in the oceans, in the rivers, at sea, up the hills and down the valleys to preserve their culture. We will fight the battles of Tiko and Santa to keep the heathen at bay." (*Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27, 1993 p. 3).

Undoubtedly, some have argued, Anglophones inherited a good and credible educational system with acceptable international standards from British colonisation. This system has been adapted to local contexts, improved and upheld for decades. But unfortunately, the efficient Anglo-Saxon Teachers Training colleges and Technical Education centres have since been destroyed by the Francophone-led governments. Anglophone secondary schools, with well-equipped science laboratories and libraries, put the emphasis on functional education. But since unification, Anglophone students, especially those with distinctions in the "A" Level subjects, have been suffering untold agony and frustration in the Yaoundé University, a Francophone institution. Lecturers are almost entirely Francophone. The few Anglophone lecturers have mainly been relegated to teach minor courses with low coefficients. This favours the Francophone students who

constitute the majority. In spite of this, Dr. Moses Bessong, an Anglophone Economics lecturer, was humiliated and driven out by the Francophone students, for teaching a major course in English. The Francophone Dean and Chancellor swiftly replaced him with a Francophone lecturer. Mrs. Effimba of GBHS Yaoundé was also swiftly replaced by a Francophone.

The Anglophone, as a major, distinct, cultural and linguistic component (over 4 million) were entitled to a University of their own. The wicked and deliberate denial of this right by the Francophone-controlled governments for three decades has caused irreparable ruin to numerous Anglophone talents.

The proliferation of French-style technical colleges necessary for training skilled manpower was designed to frustrate Anglophones. After three decades, there is still no provision for training Anglophone technical school teachers for these colleges. While the Douala University Centre trained adequate technical teachers or Francophone schools in "ENEST", admission for Anglophones is almost impossible. That is why today, there are over 90 per cent of Francophone teachers in our technical colleges. While Francophone students often protest against lecturers in English at University level, our kids are taught by Francophones at this low level in French, pidgin or Franglais. What useful skills do we expect from these pidgin taught products from Anglophone technical colleges? Many of the few who manage to go past the "CAP" are often frustrated with their worthless certificates not backed by the know-how for possible self-employment. Some tend to start studying for the GCE "O" level in order to continue with their education. Can we continue with this bad state of teaching in our technical colleges?

The common excuse from Francophone authorities, for the overwhelming dominance of Francophone teaching pidgin in our technical colleges has always been lack of qualified Anglophone Technical school teachers. Meanwhile for 33 years, the Francophone regimes have refused to provide institutions in English for such training. Therefore, Anglophone children who see teaching in French and pidgin as a real handicap, choose courses in English, in schools that prepare them for external certificate exams. This category is not spared the frustration either. The fees paid for the exams are never forwarded to

Britain. Imagine the time wasted in school and the enormous sums paid as fees for certificate exams of international standards like the RSA, Pitman, London Chambers of Commerce etc, only to be told that the student cannot write.

Yet, Francophones have no problem doing their external certificate exams as shown on the MINEDUC calendar regarding institutions in France. All these tricks by the Francophone regimes are a clear denial of quality education to Anglophones. Can Anglophone children and parents, the Francophone education Minister, Mr. Achidi Achu and the Cameroon government continue to pretend that there is no grand design to annex and assimilate the Anglophone? There is no doubt that written reports from principals, as chiefs of GCE Centres, point to these irregularities and abuses. These abuses which have multiplied over the years were also reported by the students, to their parents. These include: very poor printing, omission of question, illegible questions, repeating questions of one section in another, blank spaces for some questions, marked shortage of question papers. In addition, groups of candidates take turns to write the exams in shifts late into the night wherein students in some areas use candles. French spellings mysteriously creep into question sheets, and there are also many wrong spellings with resultant confusion, improvisations, etc. This negative examination climate has a certain psychological effect that seriously hampers performance and creates undue failure. Anglophones have vowed to fight on, restore the credibility of the GCE and save the future of our children from ruin.

Dr. Paul Tan saw the Anglophones as an endangered species, endangered by this French cultural crusade against everything Anglo-Saxon. He writes (*Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27, 1993 p.4): "A cultural war has recently been declared from Mauritius between the Francophonie and the Anglo-Saxon world community. Prior to this open declaration of war, it is now certain that Cameroon has been the test laboratory in which the preliminary experiments have been carried out over the years in order to assess the efficiency of the methods. The guinea pigs in this experimentation have been no other than the Anglophone community in Cameroon.

What exactly has been going on in this laboratory?

(1) The present burning issue of the GCE and other Anglophone

exams is the tail end of a ten year-old battle aimed at wiping out any traces of Anglo-Saxon culture in Cameroon. When in his press conference last week Minister Mbella Mbappe declared that things were evolving "pas par pas" (step by step), he meant what he was saying. When he stated that the validation of and the recognition of certificates was a matter of sovereignty, adding that Cameroon would refuse to recognize Certificates obtained in countries that do not recognize Cameroonian diplomas, he was in effect jubilantly reacting to the British government. The truth, gathered from sources close to this Minister, is that last week the British government wrote informing Mbella Mbappe that they are now seriously considering withdrawing their validation of the 1991, 1992 and 1993 Cameroon GCE Certificates. In addition, they would inform all British Universities, Commonwealth countries and others. The letter even cited earlier correspondences dated back to March last year to which Mbella Mbappe has never replied. It is, therefore, conclusively clear that any government reaction that will push the British to withdraw validation will simply fall within the framework of things; namely, render our children's future academically bleak."

"Given this endless lists of experiments that have been carefully carried out over the years, one is forced to ask this question: Was Biya bluffing when he refused to sign the Mauritius declaration of the Francophonie? The most important clause in that declaration involved an open commitment to fight against Anglo-Saxon enculturization. Since 1962, Mr. Biya has been involved at the highest level in successive governments that have since engaged in the genocide against Anglo-Saxon culture in Cameroon. He, Biya, is even on record as stating that bilingualism is an expensive option.

So if we are being made to believe that Biya's sincerity in refusing to sign the Mauritius declaration is due to a liking for the bicultural nature of Cameroon, then why this sudden change of mind?

Personally, I am tempted to believe that he is calling our bluff. It is impossible to comprehend his refusal to sign the said declaration against the background of the letter he addressed to the Mauritian Head of State prior to his hasty departure from Mauritius because in the letter, he indicated "Cameroon's

support for the total success of the Francophonie" (*Cameroon Tribune* No. 1738 of Monday 18 October 1993).

It is difficult for me to take Biya seriously when Mbella Mbappe remains Minister of National Education after doing all he can to tarnish the image of his government in the eyes of the Anglophones over the GCE saga, and when Mr. Inoni remains Assistant Secretary General at the Presidency after circulating a fake document supposed to have been the text of application of the GCE Board signed by the Prime Minister. Top executive forgery of the highest order!

No, we shall not be fooled by the smoke screen reaction coming from a man whose intransigence with regard to the possibility of an Anglophone President, a federation proven element of an Anglo-Saxon form of constitution, has resulted in the political impasse that has accentuated our sorry economic woes.

The truth remains that a world wide Francophono-Saxonic war has been declared. From the experimental stages of the war as witnessed in Cameroon, the Anglophones have become an endangered species.

For this reason, Anglophones of all ages will have to fight tooth and nail in order to avert the cultural extinction that has been programmed for them. In this business, only the fittest survive.

To substantiate his own claims of a calculated Francophone policy of bastardization of Anglophone culture, Peter W. Vakunta bases his argument entirely on language (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20 – 27, 1993 p. 15):

The write-up is an outburst of very bitter emotions. I am still blind with rage at the time of writing. I only hope that my gall shall have subsided by the time I get to the end of this article.

Gored by the wanton bastardization of what remains of Anglo-Saxon heritage in Cameroon, I have taken it upon myself to draw attention to a few facts that have prevented the Francophone mindset from perceiving what is genuinely Anglophone.

It is common knowledge that bilingualism (Cameroonian bilingualism included) is an enriching phenomenon both to the bilingual individual and the society at large, insofar as it is given

the chance to thrive on healthy ground. For one thing, bilingualism broadens the perceptual abilities of individuals. Over and above, studies carried out in Cameroon and elsewhere show that the bilingual enjoy a certain degree of cognitive flexibility over their monolingual counterparts. Besides, linguistic pundits posit that bilingualism is an added advantage to the bilingual since what is acquired in the first language is easily transferred to the second language.

Sadly enough, in Cameroon, generalized unprovoked hostility towards the minority language community from the Francophone has produced the regrettable effect of undermining English as an official language. The Constitution is quite explicit on this point: "the official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French" Interestingly, the second fiddle role ascribed to English in this country has, for all intents and purposes, received official blessing over the years. This is a calculated subterfuge to erode the Anglophone culture, thereby confirming us to a cultural vacuum. Yes!

Otherwise, how come that, in typical Anglophone towns, one finds billboards bearing inscriptions boldly written in French, with no English translation? Tiko in the South West Province is a case in point. On entering this town, at the police check-point, the visitor is saluted in French: "Halte, Péage!" Now, for goodness sake, what does this mean to the man in the street in Tiko or anywhere else in the South West Province, who has never ventured out? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! This is just one out of a myriad of other cases. One finds such eyesores in Victoria, Buea, Kumba, Bamenda, Kumbo, Nkambe, Wum, indeed all over Southern Cameroon (West Cameroon).

Now, the question we must ask at this juncture is whether the authors of this communicative trash know that in a truly bilingual country, all notices, billboards, memos, road signs, application forms, health booklets, etc are written in two official languages? Do they know that any departure from this constitutional provision is tantamount to a breach that may breed rebel reaction?

Let me remind public authorities -- Mayors, Governors, Divisional Officers, Ministers, police officers, gendarmes, and more that there is a pool of talented, industrious translators and interpreters at the Presidency of the Republic. Translators are

also found in every blessed ministry in Yaoundé. These ladies and gentlemen were trained at the expense of the state and owe it as a duty to translate official texts from French into English and vice versa. Let our administrators avail themselves of the services of these diligent servants of the State. Let our hollow linguistic loyalty and fake cultural allegiance not stop us from seeing the invaluable job our translators and interpreters are doing.

There is no iota of doubt that some diplomats accredited to Yaoundé have passed out on reading the linguistic refuse that litters our billboards, bus stops, airports, office doors, etc. This so-called capital city is becoming a real cause for concern. Here and there, one reads junk such as: "to gather dirtiness is good" which is meant to be a translation for "balayer, nettoyer, ramasser la saleté c'est bien" I also found one billboard bearing such nonsense as "Not to make dirty is better", intended to translate "ne pas salir c'est mieux". Big fun, isn't it?

Listen, I do not care a fig about the correctness of the French version of the above examples. In fact, psychosociological factors have made it quite impossible for me to master Voltaire's language beyond the level that affords me a little garri. However, I do care very much about what goes down on paper in the name of English in Cameroon. It is my duty to contribute my own quota towards saving this prestigious world language from imminent adulteration and decay.

This reminds me of some heart-rending stuff I read somewhere in the name of C.A.P examination. This is an excerpt: "Each candidat should pick by bilot a sujet. Each sujet is mark over 40 marks. For each port, candidat shall établish the working mothed card. Fill in the analysis car in annexe "B" ...

Sincerely, if you are a true Anglophone parent, your tears should be watering the page you are reading now. It speaks volumes about how tiny we, Anglophones, appear in the eyes of the Francophone. It is a tip of the iceberg that constitutes the plight of the Anglophone in Cameroon. It is a manifestation of our perennial nightmares.

Now, you Anglophone, is it any wonder to you that the raving MINEDUC boss, Mbella Mbappe, was audacious enough to yap in the face of TAC representatives and members of the *Sondengam Committee* as follows: "You can do what you like with

your GCE, none of my children studies in Cameroon!"

Who says the end of the tunnel is near? And who says the GCE tussle will not enable the "frogs" and the "Anglos" to consummate their long-awaited divorce? The vendetta definitely continues!

Please, lest I forget, tell our language policy-makers to spare us their collective idiocies. In English we say: "Stop, tollgate!" not "Halte péage!"

Thanks for learning belatedly.

The above arguments are in line with the Cameroon Anglophone Movement's position, whose Yaoundé chapter chairperson reiterated, following Mbella Mbappe's light-hearted, carefree attitude to the plight of the Anglophones over the GCE (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 September 29-October 6, 1993 p.16):

CAM has always known and made it clear that:

- La République du Cameroun is a colonial power in Southern Cameroons;
- To La République du Cameroon, Southern Cameroonians are a conquered and subjugate people who must never be allowed to go.

Given our firm knowledge of La République and its ways, the GCE Crisis has come as no surprise to us. The GCE crisis should at last teach those naive Southern Cameroonians who still refer to La République as their country and Fatherland, that there is no fatherland and country other than Southern Cameroons.

The more we compromise with these people the longer shall be our suffering and subjugation.

What Mbella Mbappe has done is only the tip of the iceberg in the grand design of La République du Cameroun to completely annihilate everything Southern Cameroonian. Any Francophone in Mbella Mbappe's position would do exactly the same! For 33 years they have rejected everything Southern Cameroonian even to the detriment of their own country. The only thing they have not rejected is the natural resources of Southern Cameroons.

Another thing CAM also knows is that La République is terrified at the prospect of a rising and united Southern Cameroonian leadership.

Some Southern Cameroonians, either from short-sightedness, from lack of knowledge of history, or from the effects of intense assimilation by La République, are hopeless about the prospect of our ever being freed from the yoke of the infernal Francophone system we were cornered into.

CAM reassures all Southern Cameroonians that there is hope and there is no reason to give up. Our strongest source of hope is the gallant struggle all worthy Southern Cameroonians are now waging to free Southern Cameroons from domination.

If the Jews could ever free themselves from enslavement by Egyptians; If African Nationalists could force Europeans to loosen their grip on Africa; If even the self-proclaimed infinitely superior and wise whites of South Africa are today negotiating with the blacks whom they thought were utterly and for ever incapable of freeing themselves; If after more than 70 years of false unity the Soviet Union has today split apart; If Eritrea is now an independent State recognised by Ethiopia; If Israel, with all its military, financial and intellectual might is today negotiating with the relatively powerless PLO; then fellow Southern Cameroonians shall be free and we will one day be another example to some oppressed people somewhere in the world.

CAM calls on All Southern Cameroonians to:

1. be unflinching and resolute. Be prepared to keep their children at home for the next 2 or 3 years until our demands, so aptly expressed by TAC are met;
2. withdraw from the politics of La République, especially their political parties;
3. reduce their economic dependence on La République as much as possible
4. intensify their involvement in the struggle;
5. join the southern Cameroonian Civil Servants Association as a matter of urgency, (contact CAM or AAC for registration)

Let us be reminded of our pledge: “We” the people of Anglophone Cameroon, convinced of the justice of our cause and relying firmly on the protection of the almighty God, do hereby, in support of this declaration (AAC declaration) and in

pursuit of the objectives therein set out, mutually pledge to each other, our lives, well-being, property, careers and freedom”.

Chapter Three

The Church Played a Major Role

As part of the civil society, the Church did not stay on the sidelines in the struggle to rescue the GCE. From the pulpits and in conference rooms, strong statements were issued by both the Catholic and Presbyterian Church authorities. In a “humble and earnest appeal” to the Right Honourable Simon Achidi Achu, Prime Minister, the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province requested his immediate intervention to rescue the GCE. Here is how Ntemfac Ofege of *Cameroon Post* (No. 0184 October 10, 1993 P.11) summarised it for his readers:

In a powerful and compact 19 page document plus attendant annexure, the Bishops reminded the PM of similar attempts to tamper with the educational heritage which still obtains west of the Mungo; an educational heritage that goes back more than sixty years; “a heritage considered as priceless and inalienable by the people of the North West and South West Provinces”.

According to the Bishops, their appeal “concerns the future of the GCE Examination, and, closely connected with it the very survival of the Anglophone Education system in Cameroon”. After commending the PM for the felicitous action taken on 11th September 1992 in setting up the Sondengam Committee whose “marvellous report” was completed and tabled to government on the 20th of November 1992, the Bishops continued that, “We are reliably informed that the Honourable Minister of National Education was impressed with the Report, and that he forwarded it to you, with his own favourable comments, on the 7th of January 1993”.

The Bishops reminded the PM that on July 1 1993, the Head of state signed a decree creating a GCE Board and some weeks later an ad hoc Committee was set up to draw up the text which would spell out the modalities of the application of the Decree of July 1, 1993. That committee completed its work on the 14 of September 1993.

After pointing out the above gave the impression that a satisfactory breakthrough “of the GCE saga was imminent”, the Bishops write that they “find it impossible to express in words

the unfathomable depth of shock and of utter dismay” they felt as on the same day that the second Sondengam Commission completed its work, in the deep of the night, soldiers sneaked into Bamenda and Buea to carry away GCE Examination scripts. The Bishops pointed out clearly that the government-sponsored act is a clear ‘betrayal”, and a show of government double-standards. They insisted that the act not only undermines government’s credibility but such behaviour showed clearly that the words of the rulers of the country cannot be taken seriously. The Bishops appealed to PM to restore order.

To the Bishops, the Anglo-Saxon system of education in Cameroon was in jeopardy. The GCE Examinations Board was not an issue of partisan politics. It transcended partisan politics. This fact was clearly shown in the Report of the Sondengam Commission, pages 6-7, which briefly delineates the vicissitudes of the GCE Examination between 1983 and 1989, i.e., during the period of the single-party state, when hardly any Cameroonians were even remotely thinking of restoring the multi-party system in our country. At least thrice during that period of six years (1983-1989), Agents of the Ministry of National Education attempted to undermine and to subvert the GCE Examination. Each of these attempts was stoutly resisted and checkmated by the resolute and unanimous will of the people of the North West and South West Provinces. This is a clear sign that the GCE Examination cannot be considered, honestly, as an issue of partisan politics. It is an issue on which the people of the North West and South West Provinces feel absolutely united, irrespective of religious creed, political persuasion or ethnic origin.

The question of the GCE examinations Board is one that immediately concerns the Cultural Identity of the Anglophones in this country.

It concerns the survival, or otherwise, of the Anglo-Saxon System of Education in Cameroon.

It concerns one of the Fundamental Human Rights according to which “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children” (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26. 3).

It concerns one of the Rights of the Family according to which “The primary right of Parents to educate their children

must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between Parents, Teachers and School Authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give citizens a voice in the functioning of Schools and in the formulation and implementation of education policies" (*Charter of the Rights on the Family*, Article 5).

The Bishops then recount other measures taken to undermine the Anglophone way of life: Anglophones now drive on the right, the franc has replaced the sterling as legal tender, the school year has now been streamlined to fit that of East Cameroon, the metric system has come in etc." Yet, at no point in time has any of Anglo-Saxon value been adopted by East Cameroonians. The late Professor Dr. Bernard Nsokika Fonlon saw it coming and wrote as far back as in 1964.

"Therefore unless the East Cameroon leader and intellectual in whose hand cultural initiative lies, is prepared to share this authority with his brother from West of the Mungo, unless he is prepared to make the giant effort to break loose from the strait jacket of his French education, unless he will show proof of intellectual probity and admit candidly that there are things in the Anglo-Saxon way of life that can do this country good, there is little chance of survival neither for the English influence, nor even for African values in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. With African values moribund, with John Bullism weak and in danger of being smothered, we will all be French in two generations or three".

The Bishops then outlined the gradual but vicious measures to demolish the Anglophone school system. They write:

"At the end of the 1960s, there were, in the then federated State of West Cameroon, twelve Teacher Training Colleges (one Government, 2 Baptist, 3 Presbyterian and 6 Catholic), all of them boarding Institutions, each of which offered a full five-year training course for Primary School Teachers. By the middle of the nineteen seventies, practically all the Training Colleges owned and operated by the Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics had closed down as a consequence of the subtle policy of asphyxiation.

The glorious Teacher Training tradition which flourished in the former British Cameroons has now practically disappeared. It was a tradition in which Teachers received a

professional and ethical formation of the highest standards characterised by Spartan discipline. The near total disappearance of our teachers' Training College tradition now reflects itself in the deplorable standards of our Primary Schools. The responsibility for all this lies squarely with the Ministry of National Education. It should be noted that no Minister with an Anglo-Saxon educational background has ever headed that Ministry since Reunification on 1st October 1961!

In light of all these sad developments, it is quite understandable why our Anglophone compatriots feel convinced that they cannot trust anyone apart from themselves to preserve, to safeguard, to foster, to promote and to develop whatever is left of the Anglophone Educational System in Cameroon. Together with the overwhelming majority of the people of the North West and South West Provinces, we are convinced that a Cameroon Examinations Board, managed by people who have themselves gone through the Anglophone Educational System, and who sincerely believe in that system, is the one and only satisfactory answer to the legitimate demands of the people concerned.

Another key point, in the memorandum is the pace at which examination fraud is creeping into schools in West Cameroon even into schools run by the churches. The Bishops then highlight a section of the Sondengam Commission report which reads: "Nearly all people interviewed expressed dismay at the decadence into which examinations have fallen in Cameroon. There is a general malaise about the lack of credibility in examinations at all levels of the Cameroon school system. An independent Examination Board would be one way of restoring credibility to our Examinations. Moreover, it would take off political pressure from those in charge of running examinations. The advent of multipartyism puts some urgency on the creation of an independent examination Board".

The end bit is no doubt the question asked in an article entitled: "Corruption, Ethique et Travaux Publics" by Father Jean Mousé who writes: "Comment éviter la corruption dans un pays où la tricherie commence à l'école? - Tant que les enfants, à partir des classes les plus élémentaires, prendront l'habitude de tricher et verront-leurs de les voir entrer sans dépaysement dans certaines pratiques délictueuses."

Translation: How can corruption be eradicated when fraud begins in school. As long as children in even kindergarten cheat and they see their parents cheating, one should not be surprised to see them involved in unholy acts in the future. This latest memorandum from the Bishops remains a priceless document for all Anglophones. It is signed by Bishop Pius S. Awa of Buea, Bishop Cornelius Fontem Esua of Kumbo and Archbishop Paul Verdzekov of the Bamenda Archdioceses.

Although the above summary is good, the “humble and earnest appeal” by the Bishops is such a powerful and historic document that, as Rotcod Gobata advises (*Cameroon Post* No. 0185 October 13 – 20, 1993 p.5), one must read it in its entirety and not depend on the garbled summaries that appeared in the newspapers. And so, I reproduce it, that you may read and digest for yourself.

Archbishop's House
P.O. BOX 82 Bamenda
North West Province
Republic of Cameroon

A Humble and Earnest Appeal
By
The Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province
To
The Right Honourable Simon Achidi Achu, MP
Prime Minister

Your Excellency,

1. Sixteen years ago, on 10th February 1977, the Proprietors of the Protestant and Catholic Schools in the North West and South West Provinces addressed a letter to the Honourable Minister of National Education concerning the creation of a Cameroonian General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination. In that letter, we pleaded for the retention of Religious Knowledge as a subject in the Cameroon GCE Examination, because we had been reliably informed that it was the intention of the Government to exclude that subject from the GCE. We set our appeal to the Minister within the context of the educational heritage of the

North West and South West Provinces. At the same time, we expressed the ardent hope that the Minister would not seek to suppress and eliminate an educational heritage that went back more than sixty years, a heritage considered as priceless and inalienable by the people of the North West and South West Provinces. We herewith attach a copy of that letter.

2. Today, we the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province address a humble and earnest appeal to you the Head of the Cameroon Government, concerning the Cameroon GCE Examination. This time, our appeal concerns the future of this Examination, and, closely connected with it, the very survival of the Anglophone educational system in our country.

3. We would like to express our sincere gratitude and warm appreciation to you for the felicitous action which you took on the 11th September 1992 in setting up a committee to work on the Creation of a General certificate of Education Examination Board. This Committee, which comprised highly competent and seasoned professionals, worked under the distinguished chairmanship of Professor Luc Beibam Sondengam, which is why we shall hereinafter refer to it as the Sondengam Committee.

4. We are convinced that your Excellency must have felt legitimately proud of the marvellous Report of the Sondengam Committee which is dated 20th November 1992. We are reliably informed that the Honourable Minister of National Education was impressed with the Report, and that he forwarded it to you, with his own favourable comments, on the 7th January 1993. We continued to follow, with keenest interest, the unfolding story of the GCE Board which is of such vital importance to all the people of our Ecclesiastical Province. Later on in the year, we learned that the head of State had signed a Decree on 1st July 1993 creating a GCE Board.

5. A few weeks ago, we learned that the Honourable Minister of National Education had set up an ad hoc Committee to draw up the Text which would spell out the modalities of application of the Decree just mentioned. It seemed to us that we were on the

verge of arriving at a satisfactory solution of the GCE issue in our country, a solution which would go some way in meeting the cherished and legitimate exigencies and aspirations of the people of the North West and South West Provinces. Official Government announcements repeatedly broadcast on the government-controlled Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation (CRTV) also led us to believe that at last, a satisfactory breakthrough was imminent. These official announcements specified, *inter alia*, that, henceforth, and by Ministerial order, Buea and Bamenda would be the only marking centres for the GCE Examination.

6. On Tuesday, 14th September 1993, the ad hoc Committee mentioned above, handed in to the Honourable Minister of National Education the draft Text of the Modalities of Application which it had been asked to draw up.

However, it soon became known that on that very Tuesday, 14th September 1993, at about 01 a.m., at dead of night, armed forces carried away the GCE Examination scripts from the Bamenda and Buea marking Centres to Yaoundé. This was followed by official announcements to the effect that the Examination would now be marked only in Yaoundé, and that a draft Decree creating a National Examinations office with Headquarters in Yaoundé was on the verge of completion and eventual promulgation.

7. Your Excellency, we find it impossible to express in words the unfathomable depth of shock and of utter dismay that we felt on learning about this dramatic and altogether unexpected turn of events brought about by a Minister who had earlier assured the Cameroon public, repeatedly, that he was about to solve the GCE question in a manner at least partially consonant with the legitimate demands of the people of the North West and South West Provinces. In the action carried out by Government Agents on Tuesday night, 14th September, and in the aftermath of that action, we see nothing else but downright betrayal. The question everyone is asking is this: How can the Honourable Minister who set up the ad hoc Committee on the GCE Board, and all along gave assurances that all would be well, treat the people of

the North West and South West Provinces in this way? How can he so wantonly undermine the Government's credibility? If such behaviour on the part of an Honourable Minister is allowed to stand, who will ever take seriously the words of the Rulers of our country?

8. We earnestly and humbly appeal to you, as the Prime Minister and Head of the Cameroon Government, to use the authority which is yours to restore the right order. We respectfully urge you to act swiftly in order that the GCE Examinations scripts shamefully and clandestinely spirited away to Yaoundé by the armed forces be returned to Buea and Bamenda, and that the Text of the Modalities of the Implementation of the Decree creating the GCE Board which was handed over by the ad hoc Committee to the Honourable Minister on Tuesday, 14th September 1993, be put into operation in keeping with the assurances earlier given by the same Honourable Minister.

9. The GCE Examinations Board is not an issue of partisan politics. It transcends partisan politics. This fact is clearly shown in the Report of the Sondengam Committee, pages 6 - 7, which briefly delineates the vicissitudes of the GCE Examination between 1983 and 1989, i.e., during the period of the single party state, when hardly any Cameroonians were even remotely thinking of restoring the multi-party system in our country. At least thrice during that period of six years (1983 -1989), agents of the Ministry of National Education attempted to undermine and subvert the GCE Examination. Each of these attempts was stoutly resisted and checkmated by the resolute and unanimous will of the people of the North West and South West Provinces. This is a clear sign that the GCE Examination cannot be considered, honestly, as an issue of partisan politics. It is an issue on which the people of the North West and South West Provinces feel absolutely united, irrespective of religious creed, political persuasion or ethnic origin.

10. The question of the GCE examinations Board is one that immediately concerns the Cultural identity of the Anglophones in this country. It concerns the survival, or otherwise, of the

Anglo-Saxon system of Education in Cameroon. It concerns one of the Fundamental Human Rights according to which "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children" (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26.3). It concerns one of the Rights of the Family according to which "The primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between parents. Teachers and Schools Authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give citizens a voice in the functioning of Schools and in the formulation implementation of educational policies" (*Charter of the Right of the Family* Article 5,e).

11. Your Excellency is undoubtedly aware that there is a conviction which is shared by millions of Anglophones in this country, namely that some of the Francophone rulers of this country wish to assimilate and transform us into their own image and likeness. Professor Bernard Nsokika Fonlon, of blessed memory, whose unalloyed patriotism cannot be impugned or gainsaid by anyone, called attention to the incipient and creeping policy of assimilation in 1964, twenty-nine years ago, when he wrote:

"In three years of unification, sundry uses and institutions, thanks to articles five and six of the federal constitution, have now come from the East into the West. Furthermore, in West Cameroon, they now drive on the right, the franc has replace sterling as legal tender, the school year has now been streamlined to fit that of the East and Metric System has now replaced unwieldy British measures.

But I have searched in vain for one such use or institution brought into the East through West Cameroon. Outside its own federate frontiers, the influence of West Cameroon is practically nil.

By the very nature of things and by the force of circumstances, therefore, the tide is running hard against Anglo-Saxon influence in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Thus, this much is clear that, if we leave things to chance, if the will and the positive choice of our leaders do not intervene, there is hardly any hope of worthy British uses and institutions surviving in our

cultural corpus.

...Therefore, unless the East Cameroon leader and intellectual, in whose hands cultural initiative lies, is prepared to share this authority with his brother from West of the Mungo; Unless he is prepared to make the giant effort necessary to break loose from the strait-jacket of his French education, unless he will show proof of intellectual probity and admit candidly that there are things in the Anglo-Saxon way of life that can do this country good, there is little chance of survival, neither for the English influence, nor even for African values in the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

With African values moribund, with John Bullism weak and in danger of being smothered, we will all be French in two generations or three!" (1)

12. Everything that has happened in Cameroon since these words were written bears testimony to the perception and farsightedness of Professor Fonlon.

With regard to Education, some of our Francophone compatriots have candidly and openly admitted the lack of sympathy, to say the least, which the Ministry of National Education has consistently exhibited towards the Anglophone Educational system in our country. These Francophone academics call attention to the real reason which explains why the Ministry of National Education failed to implement Law No. 63/13 of June 1963 on the organisation of general secondary and technical education. They write:

"Mais comme la langue structure ici notre vision du monde et que nous tenions plus à nos différences qu'à l'Unité nationale, nous avons préféré hélas le statu quo, nous sentant plus à l'aise dans le double carcan hérité de la colonisation: BEPC, Probatoire et Baccalauréat pour les uns, GCE, O and A level pour les autres. L'honnêteté commande cependant de reconnaître que la non-mise en application de cette structure tient au fait qu'elle était plus proche du système anglo-saxon (5+2 que du système français (4+3). Trop Francophile, on n'a pas voulu se laisser inféoder par les Anglo-Saxons, oubliant que même les Français de France sont désormais conscients que le système Anglo-Saxon gagne de plus en plus le monde, et qu'il importe de s'y aligner. C'est du reste chose faite au niveau de

l'Université où le doctorat unique a été institué." (2)

13. A French scholar, Michel Prouzet, who it seems, once remarkable candour, the policies and practices designed to assimilate and to transform the Anglophones into the image and likeness of their Francophone compatriots in the following words:

"La prépondérance de la francophonie apparaît en conséquence à tous les niveaux. Tout d'abord à niveau politique. Les proches collaborateurs du président Ahidjo (lui-même Francophone) sont de langue maternelle française. S'il y a bien un certain contingent de ministres Anglophones dans chaque équipe gouvernementale, les postes ministériels clés sont toujours restés aux mains de Francophone. Ainsi en est-il du portefeuille des finances, des forces armées, de l'administration territoriale, des Affaires Etrangères. En conséquence, les ministres Anglophones sont relégués dans les fonctions ministérielles plus techniques (mines, agriculture, etc...).

A l'Université, la prééminence du français sur l'anglais est non moins flagrante. Sur un effectif actuel total de 350 enseignants de tous grades et de nationalités diverses, seule une soixantaine est de langue anglaise. Compte tenu en outre de la difficulté qu'il y a de comparer les titres universitaires français et anglais, c'est en général le diplôme français qui prévaudra au grand dam de la minorité Anglophone.

Tous ces facteurs favorisent bien entendu l'utilisation et la progression du français. Cette langue a même tendance à s'étendre au-delà du Mungo, en raison de l'émigration des travailleurs de la région de Douala vers Victoria ou Buéa.

De son côté, la transformation récente réalisée par la constitution du 2 juin 1972 de la République Fédérale en République Unie du Cameroun est un autre facteur de renforcement de la culture Francophone. Certes, les auteurs de cette réforme constitutionnelle ont tenu à souligner officiellement que celle-ci n'infirmerait pas la spécificité Anglophone; mais de telles affirmations sont loin d'emporter la conviction des observateurs.

De fait, l'harmonisation de la législation nationale, qui est la conséquence directe de l'unification du pays, conduit inéluctablement les camerounais Anglophones à adopter la

plupart des usages en vigueur dans la partie Francophone et à abandonner les leurs. Il ne peut en être autrement. On ne saurait concevoir, en premier lieu, que des disparités puissent continuer à affecter la législation d'un pays devenue unitaire. Le président Ahidjo l'a reconnue lui-même publiquement. En conséquence, les règles en usage de part et d'autre du Mungo devront être harmonisées. La tâche est délicate, tant les divergences sont grandes. Celles-ci concernent notamment des secteurs aussi fondamentaux que ceux de l'administration territoriale, de l'organisation judiciaire, de la propriété du sol, de la fonction publique, de la législation sociale, etc... En raison de la prédominance, désormais connue, de la partie Francophone du Cameroun, il est impensable que l'harmonisation souhaitée de la législation s'accomplisse à partir du modèle en vigueur à l'ouest du Mungo. Du temps même où le Cameroun était une République Fédérale, certaines règles appliquées à l'est, notamment dans la fonction publique, avaient été transposées à l'ouest, sans que la réciproque se soit produite (à l'exception de quelques cas secondaires). De même, les juges camerounais, parfois même en matière fédérale, avaient coutume de se référer, parfois même jusque dans les motifs de leurs arrêts, à la jurisprudence administrative ou judiciaire française. Enfin, exemple prenant valeur de symbole, les policiers Anglophones reçurent à l'époque de la fédération, des uniformes directement inspirés des traditions vestimentaires en usage dans l'armée française: quant aux juges Anglophones, ils durent abandonner le port de perruque... Nous sommes aujourd'hui au lendemain de la naissance de la République Unie. D'ores et déjà, certains textes ont généralisé les solutions du droit d'inspiration française. C'est le cas notamment pour l'ensemble des règles concernant le contentieux administratif. Tel qu'il est organisé par l'ordonnance du 26 août 1992, le contentieux administratif national est essentiellement d'inspiration Francophone.

Ce n'est en somme que dans certains secteurs secondaires que l'harmonisation de la législation nationale se fera au profit du droit d'inspiration anglaise. L'organisation de l'administration pénitentiaire en vigueur dans l'ex-zone britannique servira ainsi vraisemblablement de modèle dans l'ancien Cameroun oriental, si l'on croit une déclaration récente de M. Victor Mvodo, ministre de l'Administration Territoriale.

De même, certains aspects de la procédure pénale et du droit du travail en vigueur dans les Provinces Anglophones seront généralisées à tout le pays.

En conclusion, il semble que la prééminence de la francophonie devrait aller en s'accroissant. Si à long terme une telle évolution n'est guère préoccupante, puisqu'elle débouchera vraisemblablement sur une homogénéité culturelle plus grande du Cameroun, en revanche, cette évolution pose des problèmes dans le court terme. Pour l'heure, en effet, une large partie de l'élite Anglophone a conscience d'être victime, dans sa culture et sa spécificité, de l'unification constitutionnelle du pays"(3).

Nothing could be clearer than this.

14. The process of the demolition and destruction of the Anglophone School System began in earnest in the early nineteen seventies.

At the end of the nineteen sixties, there were , in the then Federated state of West Cameroon, twelve Teacher Training colleges (one Government, 2 Baptist, 3 Presbyterian and 6 Catholic), all of them boarding institutions, each of which offered a full five-year training course for primary School Teachers. By the middle of the nineteen seventies, practically all the Training Colleges owned and operated by the Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics had closed down as a consequence of the subtle policy of asphyxiation.

The glorious Teacher Training tradition which flourished in the former British Cameroons has now practically disappeared. It was a tradition in which Teachers received a professional and ethical formation of the highest standards, characterised by Spartan discipline. The near total disappearance of our Teachers' Training College tradition now reflects itself in the deplorable standards of our primary Schools. The responsibility for all this lies squarely with the Ministry of National Education. It should be noted that no Minister with an Anglo-Saxon educational background has ever headed that Ministry since Reunification on 1st October 1961!

15. In light of all these sad developments, it is quite understandable why our Anglophone compatriots feel convinced that they cannot trust anyone apart from themselves to preserve, to safeguard, to foster, to promote and to develop

whatever is still left of the Anglophone Educational System in Cameroon. Together with the overwhelming majority of the people of the North West and South West Provinces, we are convinced that a Cameroon Examinations Board, managed by people who have themselves gone through the Anglophone Educational System, and who sincerely believe in that system, is the one and only satisfactory answer to the legitimate demands of the people concerned.

16. Your Excellency, Sir, You are a witness that until the recent past, cheating and fraud in Examinations were totally unknown in the former Federated State of West Cameroon. Today, cheating and fraud are seriously threatening all our schools, including those which are owned and run by the Churches. In the Report of the Sondengam Committee we read "Nearly all people interviewed expressed dismay at the decadence into which examinations have fallen in Cameroon. There is a general malaise about the lack of credibility in examinations at all levels of the Cameroon school system. An independent Examinations Board would be one way of restoring credibility to our examinations. Moreover, it would take off political pressure from those in charge of running examinations. The advent of multipartyism puts some urgency on the creation of an independent Examinations Board" (4).

To restore the right order, to recover the unimpeachable ethical standards which characterised all Examinations in the former British Cameroons, we request, most respectfully, that the proposals put forward by the Sondengam Committee be accepted and rigorously implemented.

As prime Minister and Head of Government, we believe that you are deeply committed to the effort in view of the eradication of corruption in our country. We believe that you doubtlessly share the same concern recently expressed by a French Jesuit scholar about the prevalence of fraud and cheating within the schools of his own country. In an article entitled: "*Corruption, Ethique et Travaux publics*," Father Jean Moussé, S.J., of the Catholic University of Lille, writes: "Comment éviter la corruption dans un pays où la tricherie commence à l'école?On peut s'inquiéter de la formation des futures responsables, particulièrement des cadres. Tant que les enfants, à partir des

classes les plus élémentaires, prendront l'habitude de tricher et verront leurs parents tricher, tant qu'on enseignera presque exclusivement des techniques aux futurs ingénieurs sans les amener à réfléchir sur les questions propres au fonctionnement des entreprises et aux rapports de pouvoir qui s'y développent, il ne faudra pas s'étonner de les voir entrer sans dépaysement dans certaines pratiques délictueuses" (5).

17. As an alumnus of the Cameroon Protestant College Bali, a Christian School; as one who was brought up in the Anglophone School System, we are convinced that Your Excellency cannot wittingly and willingly accept to go down in history as someone who aided and abetted, even remotely, the demolition and destruction of that School System in our beloved country.

With deepest respect, we implore your Excellency to call to mind that first Principal of Your Alma Mater, Dr. D. H. O'Neill. Together with you, we fondly remember FR. Fritz Raaflaub, the indefatigable architect of the Presbyterian School System in the former British Cameroons. With deepest piety, we remember the late Pastor Abram Ngole, the First Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, who was "the first African tutor of the girls school in Victoria" (6). What must these venerable Pioneers of the Anglophone Educational System in Cameroon be thinking as they watch the reckless and unacceptable erosion and gradual destruction of the high standards which they patiently and painstakingly established in our country in the course of several decades of hard and dedicated work? Are we not called upon to preserve, cherish, safeguard and further develop the priceless heritage which they bequeathed to us?

18. We implore Your Excellency to reject the argument of those who have openly said that the Government resorted to a volte-face, and betrayed its word of honour given to the ad hoc Committee, because some Cameroonians, allegedly, interpreted the Government's "concession" on the GCE Board as a sign of weakness. We believe that what is paramount, and what matters, is whether the Text of Application of the Decree of 1st July 1993 drafted by the ad hoc Committee is, intrinsically, a good Text, designed to answer adequately the legitimate demands of the

people of the North West and South West Provinces. By rejecting the above-mentioned argument, which absolutely deserves to be rejected, you will enhance the moral authority of your Government.

19. To a certain extent, the question of the GCE Examination, of the Anglophone Educational System in our country, and of the very Cultural Identity of the former Federated State of West Cameroon can be looked upon as the problem of the Minority. It is in that regard that we would like to draw your Excellency's attention, most respectfully, as well as that of your Government, to the Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the World Day of Peace, 1st January 1989. For that occasion, the Holy Father chose the following theme: *to build peace, Respect Minorities*. In that Message, he says, inter alia:

- "The State has an obligation *to promote and foster the rights of minority groups*, since peace and security can only be guaranteed through respect for the rights of all those for whom the State has responsibility".
- "The first right of minorities is the right to exist.... The right to exist can be undermined also in more subtle ways".
- "The increased awareness which is found today at every level regarding the situation of minority groups constitutes for our own times a hopeful sign for the coming generations and for the aspirations of minority groups themselves. Indeed, in a sense, respect for minorities is *to be considered the touchstone of social harmony* and the index of civic maturity attained by a country and its institutions. In a truly democratic society, to guarantee the participation of minorities in political life is a sign of a highly developed civilisation, and it brings honour upon those nations in which the citizens are guaranteed a share in national life in a climate of true freedom".

The policies and practices aimed at the assimilation of the Anglophones, and at the extinction of their cultural Identity, policies and practices encapsulated in the graphic description of Michel Prouzet and other scholars acquainted with Cameroon

affairs, are a far cry from what Pope John Paul II says in the Message just quoted "*To build peace, Respect Minorities.*"

20. We perfectly realise, Your Excellency, that our detractors will immediately interpret the Appeal which we present to you as "meddling in politics". You know that such an accusation simply does not stand up to scrutiny. As we earlier said, the issue of the GCE Examination and of the Board to handle all Anglophone Examinations, the issue of the survival of the Anglophone Education System, the issue of the preservation and safeguarding of the Anglophone Cultural Identity in Cameroon, are not issues of partisan politics.

We are Pastors, and, by definition, Educators. We are also the Custodians of Catholic Schools which exist and operate within the context of the Anglophone Education system of our country. Consequently, we can legitimately say about the GCE Board: *Nostra res agitur*. We are acutely aware that if we failed to express our solidarity, publicly, with those who are struggling on behalf of the cause of the Anglophone Education system in our country, we shall stand condemned at the bar of history. We do not want to merit such condemnation.

21. Someone may object that we have not mentioned the creation of the University of Buea which would seem to be evidence that the Rulers of our country do not want to erode or undermine the Anglophone educational System. To that objection, we raise the following questions by way of an answer" what purpose will serve the University of Buea, if the Anglophone primary and secondary School System, and the credibility of the end-of-course Examinations are undermined? Who does not see what is happening in all Government Technical colleges in the North West and South West Provinces, a scandalous situation which seems designed to ensure that the young people of these two Provinces should have no future whatsoever in the field of technical education?

22. Your Excellency, we recognise that the views we have presented to you in this Appeal, coming from humble Citizens of no significance such as we are, may be dismissed by some people as so much irrelevant prating. In deciding to address this

Appeal to you on a matter of the highest concern to the entire Anglophone Minority of our country, we were inspired by the words of an African statesman, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, former President of Kenya, who earned the esteem and admiration of the entire world for his magnanimous recognition and *promotion of the rights of the Asiatic and European Minorities of his country*. In an Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Association of the Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa - AMECEA - held at Nairobi, Kenya, 14th July 1976, President Kenyatta said, *inter alia*:

“One of the services you give to others is to help keep them going in the right direction. We have many distractions in life and can wander off the path. We do need to constantly be put back on it again. Then, too, most of us are not theologians, and in the complexities of modern life we may not even know we are going astray - that we are making the wrong decision. That is why we need the Church in our midst to tell us when we are making a mistake. The Church is the conscience of society, and today society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we go wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistake”.

23. At the risk of sounding boring and repetitive, we want to say once more that the subject of our Appeal transcends partisan politics. In making this Appeal, we have been scrupulously mindful of the following words of Pope John Paul II. “(The priest) certainly retains the right to personal political opinions and to exercise his right to vote according to his conscience.” As the Synod said: “In circumstances in which there legitimately exist different political, social and economic options, priests like all citizens have a right to make their own personal choices. But since political options are by nature contingent and never in an entirely adequate and perennial way interpret the Gospel, the priest, who is the witness of things to come, must keep a certain distance from any political office or involvement” (*Enchiridion vaticanum*, IV, 1195). In particular, he will keep in mind that a political party can never be identified with the truth of the Gospel, and therefore, unlike the Gospel, it can never become an object of absolute loyalty. Thus the presbyter will take this relativity into account, even when citizens of the Christian faith

laudably form parties explicitly inspired by the Gospel. He must strive to shed the light of Christ on other parties and social groups as well(7). Consequently, we deny to anyone, in advance, the right to exploit what we say in this Appeal for partisan political interests.

24. As a humble service to your Excellency, we intend to render this Appeal, on account of the nature of the issue which it addresses, an issue of crucial importance for all the people of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province in particular, and of our entire country in general. In this way, we humbly submit ourselves to the impartial judgement of the public opinion of our country.

If it can be demonstrated, coldly dispassionately, with intellectual honesty, and rigorously uncompromising objectivity that the Appeal which we address to Your Excellency is unevangelical, and motivated by secret and unavowable designs;

If it were to be shown that the Report of the Sondengam Committee dated 20th November 1992, as well as the text of Application of the Decree of 1st July 1993 prepared by the ad hoc Committee set up by the Honourable Minister of National Education, and handed over to him on Tuesday, 14th September 1993, were not the fruits of a professionally expert, objective, dispassionate and non-partisan analysis of the issues entrusted to the above-mentioned Committees;

If it can be further shown that the proposals put forward by these Committee were, in actual fact, unpatriotic, and professionally unworkable and inapplicable;

If it can be shown, finally, and after taking due cognizance of the track record of the Ministry of National Education since 1st October 1961, that *the fears and anxieties which we express in this Appeal* concerning the future of the Anglophone Education system and the Anglophone Cultural Identity in this country are totally baseless and unfounded;

We the signatories of this Appeal shall withdraw it as publicly as we made it.

25. Your Excellency, Sir, we promise to pray for your intentions and for all the Members of Your Government. After delivering this appeal to you each one of us pledges himself to offer a

special Holy Mass for you, that you may be strengthened, and enlightened, to solve the issues evoked in this Appeal in a manner conducive to the promotion of peace and harmony in our country. We conclude this Appeal with a sincere and humble prayer for you and your colleagues in the Government of Cameroon, the prayer for all in Public Office which the Catholic Church recites during the General Intercessions in the Celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday:

Almighty and eternal God,
You know the longing of men's hearts
and you protect their rights
In your goodness
watch over those in authority
so that people everywhere may enjoy
religious freedom, security and peace.

May the Lord abundantly bless you.

With sentiments of the highest esteem and of deepest and most sincere respect for your exalted office,

Yours most faithfully,

+ Pius S. Awa - Bishop of Buea

+Cornelius Fontem Esua - Bishop of Kumbo

+ Paul Verdzekov - Archbishop of Bamenda

Archbishop's House Bamenda

Saturday, 25th September 1993

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10 February 1977

His Excellency

The Minister on National Education

Ministry of National Education

YAOUNDE

Subject: *Religious Knowledge As A Subject In The Cameroon GCE Examinations*

Your Excellency,

The cordial solicitude with which your Excellency has ever listened to our problems gives us the confidence that, once more, you will give your usual generous attention to the problem which the Proprietors of the Protestants and Catholic Schools in the North West and South West Provinces now present to you.

1. In the *Report on the Meeting Between British and Cameroonians Experts on The Creation of a Cameroonian General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination*, 5th – 8th January 1976, page 5, it is clearly laid down that the following subjects will no longer be offered for the GCE (Cameroon) after September 1977:
 - i British Commonwealth and Empire History
 - ii History (British Economic)
 - iii British Constitution
 - iv British Government and Political Systems
 - v Religious knowledge
2. Of the above five subjects, a clear and solid case can be made for excluding nos. i - iv inclusive, as being irrelevant and of no importance for our country. We consider with utter dismay that Religious knowledge was

also considered as so equally irrelevant, that it should have been dropped from the Cameroon GCE along with the other four subjects listed above. It is because of our utter conviction, shared by practically all our countrymen, that Religious Knowledge is of such capital and fundamental relevance in our country, that we now make this earnest and respectfully pressing appeal to your Excellency.

3. It is useful, Your Excellency, to set our present appeal within the context of our educational heritage in the North West and South West Provinces, a heritage that we are convinced you are anxious to protect, promote, and synthesise in our over-all national life. Religious studies have always formed an essential and fundamental factor in our educational system, not only as *de facto* situation, but as an exigency *de jure*. In the *Education Code (Nigeria: Colony And Southern Provinces)* No. 15 of 1926, we find the following provisions in sections 42 and 43:

“Religious Instruction”

- 42 One of the ordinary subjects in the school curriculum of all assisted schools shall be religious instruction, and a graded course approved by the proprietor shall be followed in that subject. But children whose parents or guardians do not wish them to receive religious instruction shall be given other tuition during the periods assigned to that subject. An examination shall be held in the subject at least once a year, and a report thereon forwarded to the superintendent.
- 43 (1) Religious instruction in Government schools may, at the discretion of the Director or his representative, be imparted by any qualified religious teacher, during the time set apart for such instruction. The ordinary staff of the school shall, during such time, be responsible for the

maintenance of discipline and good order, and may be present for that purpose, but shall not otherwise intervene. If in the opinion of the manager any improper instruction is being given, he will make a report to the Director of his representative.

(2) The selection of the instructor in Christian schools shall rest with the Director of his representative and if the instruction is voluntarily undertaken by a missionary or Christian Minister preference shall as a rule be given to the denomination which has a predominant influence in the district. In Mohammedan schools the selection of the "Limam" will usually be made by the Resident.

(3) Children whose parents or guardians do not wish them to receive religious instruction shall be given other tuition during the periods assigned to that subject. "

These provisions are repeated for the most part, and practically verbatim, in the *Education Ordinance (Nigeria)* No. 39 of 1948 and in the *Education Ordinance (Nigeria)* No. 17 of 1952 which regulated Education in the North West and South West Province until July 8th 1976. These legislative acts perfectly reflected the world vision of the African whom others have described as "incurable religious". It thus becomes clear why religious knowledge (Christian and Islamic) was always included as a subject in examinations such as the Teachers' Grade III, Grade II and Grade I Examinations, the West African School Certificate, the GCE, the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, etc.

Although the above legal provisions are not contained in the new Education Law, we are convinced that it is not the intention of the Ministry to suppress and eliminate a heritage that goes back more than sixty years, and which is considered of such priceless and

fundamental relevance by countless citizens.

4. We do recognise, Your Excellency, that Religious knowledge is not offered as subjects for *Brevet* and the *Baccalaureat* in the former Federated State of East Cameroon. We recognise the historical reason for this. The harmonisation of education, which the President described as a particularly delicate task when he opened the Bilingual Grammar School Buea in May 1971, will not suffer in any way whatever by the retention of Religious knowledge (Christian and Islamic) in the GCE (Cameroon). We can assure your Excellency that the inclusion of Religious knowledge as a subject on the curriculum of Secondary Schools, sanctioned by the GCE Examination at the end of course, is for all of us in these two Provinces so normal that the contrary simply baffles everyone.
5. We have said that the legislative acts of the Mandatory (later Trusteeship) Authority for the protection and promotion of Religious Education in *All Schools* in the North West and South West Provinces corresponded with the world vision of our people. As soon as Cameroonians were in a position to run their own affairs, after the inauguration of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly on October 26th 1954, our accredited representatives lost no time in laying down policy in the matter of Religious Education. In 1955, a *Policy for Education*, referred to as *Sessional Paper No. 9 of 1955* was laid before the House of Assembly at Buea. In that paper the Southern Cameroons Government declared:

“Government appreciates the fundamental influence of sound religious training in the formation of character and it is our intention therefore to see that Religious Instruction takes its rightful place in the curriculum of all schools”. After independence, the West Cameroon Government also made known its own mind about Religious Education in schools. In a statement entitled: *West Cameroon Education policy: Investment in Education*,

1963, the Government said, inter alia:

The fourth general consideration is of a religious nature. In speaking of the basic aim of education, it should not be overlooked that, in West Cameroon, the educational system has been carried out, with the expressed wish of the West Cameroon Government, mainly by the religious Voluntary Agencies. The idea has always been to produce an educated person of sound moral and religious background, and Government reiterates its wish for the continuation of this aim. Government wishes this section in the 1955 policy on education to be repeated - "Government appreciates the fundamental influence of sound religious training in the formation of character and it is our intention to see that religious instruction takes its rightful place in the curriculum of all schools." In defining the term "religious instruction", Government emphasises that this does not necessarily mean Christianity. It firmly holds to the belief that education should be open to all, irrespective of race, class, creed, colour or religion. Further, this does not mean the compulsory attendance of non-believers in classes teaching scripture, nor does it exclude the possibility of non-Christian schools. In view of the policy to give religious instruction in all schools, the teaching of religion is undertaken in all West Cameroon Government educational institutions. This is not the case in Government institutions in East Cameroon. Government recommends that when Federal Government institutions are introduced in West Cameroon, religious instruction should form a part of the curriculum.

These statements of policy may be truly said to represent our own heritage in the matter of religious education in schools.

6. For several years now, it has been made clear by our Government that a pass in Religious knowledge at the GCE. is not to be reckoned among the number of passes required for obtaining employment in government

service. A recent Decree (Decree No. 76/385 of 3 September 1976 concerning the administrative and pedagogic organization of private education. Article 39) also provides that a pass in Religious education at the GCE should not be reckoned among the subject passes for employment as a teacher in the Private schools including, consequently Protestant and Catholic Schools. In spite of this, hundreds of candidates in our two Provinces have freely continued to offer Religious knowledge over the previous years as a subject for the GCE, this has happened not only in the officially Protestant and Catholic schools, but in those of our private colleges which, in the former east Cameroon would be designated as "collège Privé Laïc". The GCE figures of any of these colleges will amply bear out what we are saying. Furthermore, significant numbers of private candidates entered Religious knowledge for the GCE in the past. Many who are Grade I Teachers today earned that Certificate as private candidates after a pass in religious studies in the GCE Advanced Level, in accordance with the stipulations of the West Cameroon Board of Education, could there be a more convincing proof of the fact that our people consider Religious knowledge as of prime importance? If this subject is retained at the GCE, and even if the Government persists in excluding it from the number of passes that qualify for a job, we can assure the Honourable Minister that our people, who have never accepted Utilitarianism à la Stuart Mill as a vision and way of life, will continue to offer to take that subject whose importance for our country far transcends the getting of a government job.

7. Religious knowledge will not figure in the June 1977 session of the Cameroon GCE. Any candidates who wish to enter for that subject this year will have to make special arrangements with London University. The fee to be paid for that one single subject (8,300) is more than double the fees payable for, say, ten subjects at the Cameroon GCE. Since taking Religious knowledge through this special arrangement with London has been

artificially rendered so costly, it is not surprising that very many children will not enter for that subject, even though they have been prepared for it.

We now hear it said that the Examination Department of the Ministry of National Education might reconsider retaining Religious knowledge in the Cameroon GCE if many candidates still entered that subject for the London GCE for the June 1977 session, notwithstanding the relatively prohibitive cost that that will entail for them.

Your Excellency will doubtlessly and unhesitatingly agree with us that by no stretch of the imagination can such a procedure stand up to scrutiny and to reason as a fair and credible criterion for assessing the popularity of otherwise of religious knowledge as a subject for the GCE. First, Religious knowledge is arbitrarily dropped from the GCE as a useless and irrelevant subject. Taking it by special arrangement with London is rendered extremely costly, and consequently odious for the overwhelming majority of candidates who are poor. And the Examinations Department hopes in this way to test the popularity of Religious knowledge after having rendered the taking of that subject particularly odious and objectively impossible for the majority. This is incredible!

We submit, Your Excellency, that if the number of entries for Religious knowledge is to be the criterion for retaining that subject, then the statistics from previous Examinations should be taken into consideration. As pointed out earlier, many candidates continued to take it, in spite of the discrimination against it. Many candidate will continue to take it when it is included as a subject for the Cameroon GCE!

8. When the Government Bilingual Grammar school was transferred from man-o-War Bay to Buea about eight years ago, the Presbyterian and Baptist Pastors at Buea, as well as the Catholic Parish Priest, approached the then Principal, who was a foreigner, praying him to grant them the same facilities to conduct religious services and

religious classes in the College premises for their adherents as had been the case at Man o' War Bay. The Principal turned down this request, telling the priest and pastors that, for their information, the Bilingual Grammar School was in an absolutely different category and tradition from every other College in the then West Cameroon. The three religious leaders then wrote and appeal to the Minister of nation Education, praying him to come to their aid. The Honourable Minister himself replied with remarkable speed, firmly and unequivocally upholding the right of the pastors to cater on the college campus, for the spiritual needs of their adherents, by conducting Religious services and Religious Classes There. We wish to reiterate our deep and abiding gratitude to the Ministry of National Education for so swiftly and firmly upholding the Religious care of our children in that college. Perhaps the Ministry might help us if a directive were sent to all Principals of Government Colleges in our two Provinces to guide them in this matter. We say this because it does happen, here and there, that principals and Headmasters of Government Schools turn down our request to teach Religion in their Schools on the plea that, by admitting this, they might thereby be contravening Government policy. We know of course that Government has never said that Religious knowledge may not be taught, during school hours, in a Government school, since this had been our tradition for more than sixty years.

9. We also wish to applaud unreservedly the practice whereby the Ministry of National Education has retained Religious knowledge as a subject in the Teachers' Grade II Examination. This has happened regularly in the past few years, and it is our earnest hope that this will continue in the years to come, not only for the Teachers' Grade II, but for the Teachers' Grade I Certificate as will. We earnestly plead, furthermore, that the practice of the Ministry in retaining Religious knowledge in the Teachers' Grade II Examination be applied equally to the Cameroon GCE.

10. We believe that a real possibility for doing so exists in the *Report on the Meeting between British and Cameroonian Experts on the Creation of a Cameroonian General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination* 5th – 8th January 1976. In fact, on page 8 of that Report, list of about twelve specified subjects is given, and it is clearly stated that those subjects, plus “any other subjects” will “eventually be added to the (Cameroon GCE subjects) list when well structured syllabuses and competent examiners are available.” In the case of Religious knowledge well-structured syllabuses are ready for Christian and Moslem Candidates. And it would be quite possible to find competent examiners in Cameroon for that subjects.
11. On December 22nd 1974, the National council for cultural Affairs, and National Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research held a joint session at Yaoundé under the Presidency of the Head of State. At the Session, several resolutions were taken outlining fundamental principles of National policy in cultural and Educational Affairs. Among those Resolutions we find the following:

“considerant que les religions, qu’elles soient celles du livre ou celles de la nature, ont un impact indéniable sur la vie et les comportements quotidiens des masses....

Recommande, Aux responsables des religious du livre ou de la nature d’aider leurs adeptes à se libérer de toute attitude et de toute réflexe fétichiste, superstitieux ou rétrograde devant les forces de la nature, afin que les croyances ne sevents pas d’alibi ou de fuite devant les responsabilités qu’impose le développement social et économique de notre pays” (cf. *Agence Camerounaise De Presse*, No. 296 *Des Dimanche* 22 *Lundi* 23 *Decembre* 1974, PP 2 - 3).

By showing its support for Religious Education through maintaining Religious

Knowledge as a subject for the Cameroon GCE, the Ministry of National Education will assist us in implementing resolutions such as the one cited above.

The superstitious outlook on life, which the above resolution asks us to eliminate from among our faithful, is not found only at the village level or among illiterates. Superstition, Your Excellency, has been found to rear its ugly head even in African Universities! (cf. Mbiti, J.S., *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1971, p. 171). It is by imparting a solid religious formation to our school pupils, which formation is diametrically opposed to superstition, that we can carry out the task expected of us.

It is also our conviction, Your Excellency, that by maintaining religious knowledge as a Cameroon GCE subject, you will thereby give unique and absolutely indispensable fillip to the efforts that all of us should deploy in order to instil into our youths that sense of professional conscientiousness demanded by President Ahidjo in his address to the National Council of the CNU party on Saturday, January 15th 1977. In that address the President declared, inter alia:

“Il faut reconnaître cependant que la conscience professionnelle n’est qu’une expression de la conscience tout court qui, elle-même, est fonction de la formation de l’individu et s’acquiert qu’au sein du milieu professionnel où une formation civique appropriée doit être donnée à l’individu. C’est en fin de compte tout le système d’éducation qui est en cause. La conscience professionnelle est ainsi le reflet de l’évolution de la société dans son ensemble”. (cf. *Agence Camerounaise De Presse*, No. 13 Des Dimanche 16 et 17 Janvier 1977, Page 18)

Is there any better means of effectively achieving this noble objective of professional conscientiousness other than by fostering religious

education in our educational institutions?

12. Your Excellency, we realise that we have bothered you with a rather long appeal. We know that you will not blame us for this, as it concerns something that touches us as citizens in the very marrow of our bones and in every fibre of our being. We are confident that you can avail yourself of the powers with which you are constitutionally invested to grant us the earnest request that we have made to you in this letter. You can be absolutely certain, Your Excellency, that such an action on your part will evoke total and universal applause among all sections of people in the North West and South West Provinces. You will thereby make a most significant contribution towards reducing to silence those unrepentant and chauvinistic colonialists who are openly hostile to any genuine harmonisation in Cameroon, in the belief that only they know what is good for our country. In fact, one of them has gone as far as to say that in any harmonisation exercise in Cameroon, nothing from the former Federated State of West Cameroon can be considered as worthy of being retained and applied to the whole country. (cf. Prouzet, M., *Le Cameroun* Paris, Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1974, pp. 64 - 65). The sympathy and understanding which you have always shown towards our problems gives us founded reasons to hope that you will, once more, give us an equitable solution to this problem.

By graciously granting our request, could your Excellency be reasonably accused of violating Article I of our country's constitution which clearly states that the United Republic of Cameroon shall be secular? By no means. The retention of Religious knowledge as a subject in the Cameroon GCE can in no sense be said to compromise the secular character of the state. It will not remove one iota from the principle, enunciated in the preamble to our constitution, according to which our State, while guaranteeing the freedom and practice of religion, maintains its neutrality and independence vis-à-vis all religions.

In fact, we as Christians believe that we should wholeheartedly uphold the autonomy, neutrality and independence of the State vis-à-vis all religions in the name of our religion. The attempts of the Church to absorb the State of vice-versa, in other words, the identification between “Throne and Altar”, have ever been a betrayal of a cardinal principle enunciated by our Divine Founder, viz : “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”. This principle, unique, and absolutely unprecedented in the history of world religions, and in fact still rejected by some world religions that unduly mix together the temporal and spiritual powers, is absolutely sacred for us, and, in fact, provides the foundation for a healthy and genuine “Laïcité” which we must all uphold, cherish, and promote.

With sentiments of highest esteem for your exalted office,

We remain, Your Excellency,
Yours sincerely,

Signed:

RT. Rev J.C. Kangsen
Moderator
Presbyterian Church in
Cameroon

Rev. Samuel Ngum
Executive Secretary
Cameroon Baptist
Convention

Signed:

+ Pius S. Awa
Bishop of Buea

+ Paul Verdzekov
Bishop of Bamenda

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon was unequivocal in its stance on the GCE stalemate. Its views and reactions to developments were later summarised in a publication titled *Cry Justice: The Church in a Changing Cameroon* (p.49-54):

According to the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon:

The issue of Anglophone education has been a very delicate and sensitive one. Anglophones have held on closely to their cherished educational system, as the last structure on which their particular survival as a cultural entity depends.

Every time the government has tried to tamper with its basic form in a significant manner, there has been a national upheaval. Some Ministers of education even lost their positions because of that. And, once, during the street protests against Government's bad intentions on the GCE, an entire police Station was burnt down in Bamenda by young students led by a girl.

On this issue, Anglophones come all our united, irrespective of their political leanings. The matter came to a head when the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) discovered that the 1991 and 1992 session of the examination was abysmally handled by the Ministry of Education. TAC feared that at the rate things were going, the examination will be completely destroyed and consequently, lose its credibility. That would mean doom for Anglophone children.

TAC with the strong backing of Anglophone parents in the whole country then demanded the establishment of an independent board to mark the examination. They made the granting of this board the only condition of marking the scripts of 1993 exams. It was a head-on collision with Government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular.

In the height of the tension, the PPC also stepped in and addressed this letter to the Prime Minister.

On the 13th October, 1993, the Prime Minister released a long awaited text of application.

To: His Excellency the Prime Minister
Honourable Simon Achidi Achu
His Excellency the Minister of National Education
Honourable Robert Mbella Mbappe

Your Excellencies,

As the stalemate over the marking of the GCE continues to deteriorate, we have been urged by our people, to raise our voice of grave concern to you. We do so in the hope that God's Holy Spirit will incline your hearts towards reason and wisdom.

We don't want to write a long piece, because we want to avoid delving into the history and the polemics of the issue. These have been stated over and over by various interested parties on different occasions. And the facts have not changed at all.

All what we want the state is the fact that the future of our children, and that of generations yet unborn to Cameroonians of English extraction is at stake until this important issue is peacefully resolved. It is most unfortunate that, this GCE matter is being linked up with the current internecine strife of party politics. We all should remember that the controversy of the GCE was on even before the advent of multi-parties. That was when even the University of London announced that it may no longer guarantee the credibility of the examinations anymore. If genuine concern and goodwill had prevailed then, the problem would have been resolved, before the introduction of party politics, with its bane and blessings. The matter concerns the culture of a whole segment of Cameroonians even if that segment is just a minority, and therefore transcends and should be placed above parochial party interests.

Your Excellencies, our humble plea is that it should be recognized that Government cannot function only from the platform of power, force, threats and intimidation. This is time when those in power should be magnanimous and walk the proverbial second mile with those perceived to be weaker. Given the nature of the current situation, Government, parents, churches, teachers, etc. have extra responsibilities. And this would not be a sign of weakness on the part of Government but it would be a mark of courage which only God can give. The country has too many problems, and people's tempers are slim and high.

For the same of our National Unity, we think it is the responsibility of Government to conceive policies that would contribute to the healing of our land rather than pursuing those policies which would only divide us more and drive us deeper and deeper into the crisis.

As we perceive things from here further intimidation and harassment of teachers will only reinforce their positions as under dogs, which normally increases public sympathy for them. It is itself from the general masses of English extraction for whom the GCE issue is so crucial to their very existence.

In the light of the above, we crave your indulgence to submit as follows:

Marking Centres:

1. We appeal to you to cancel the Yaoundé marking centre and move back all the scripts to Buea and Bamenda. This is realistic and pragmatic. Most of the teachers involved in the marking exercise come from the South West and North West Provinces.
2. In these very difficult times of economic hardship, it is not being sensitive to the economic plight of Cameroonians, to expect this big crowd of teachers to move to Yaoundé, where costs and standards of living are so much higher and expensive. It is a lot easier for these teachers to accommodate themselves in Buea and Bamenda than in Yaoundé. If, just a few teachers used to complain about the hazards of marking in Yaoundé before, what more of moving such a big crowd in these lean times, when salaries have been slashed and are not even paid regularly.

Text of Application: We do not pretend in anyway to know the workings of Government. But honestly, we are at a loss why the text of application of the decree creating the GCE board has not yet been issued, as instructed by the Head of State, even though its publication is supposed to be a major contribution to this burning problem.

Your Excellencies, we have often expressed our willingness to make our humble contribution in bringing about greater peace and reconciliation in this our beloved country. We are still willing to join our efforts with those progressive forces, particularly, other Christian bodies, to mediate in resolving this issue peacefully.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour demonstrated to us, his avowed love and concern for children. It is once more in his sacred name that we appeal to you, to eschew bitterness, self pride and the spirit of vengeance. And the Greek historian - Thucydides, reminds us of this immortal truth that "Of all manifestations of power, restraint impresses men most".

We shall continue to pray for you and our Country,
Cameroon.

Yours faithfully,

Signed:

Rt. Rev. H.A. Awasom
Moderator - Presbyterian
Church in Cameroon

Rev. Nyamsako-ni-Nku
Synod Clerk - Presbyterian
Church in Cameroon

cc: -The Head of State, President Paul Biya

About one week after, we wrote to the Prime Minister on the GCE affair, he finally issued the long awaited text of application which had become a condition for marking the scripts. Prior to that, the situation had become so explosive that a large group of Anglophone parents in the premises of the Ministry of National Education to hand in a protest to him against his poor handling of the affair. In typical style of our Government, they were brutally dispersed by troops. One parent lost his eye.

So when the text was finally announced, it was a great sign of relief. We then addressed this letter to the Prime Minister.

The Honourable Prime Minister
His Excellency Simon Achidi Achu
Yaoundé.

Your Excellency,

Further to our letter of 6th October, 1993 on the GCE stalemate, we wish to congratulate you most heartily for the announcement of the text of application at last, even though it fell short of general aspirations. It has been an act of great courage for which we commend you to God's gracious mercy.

Your Excellency, we continue to implore you, to grant the very humble pleas of all the Anglophone parents, to send back all the scripts to Buea and Bamenda for marking. as you yourself know, the atmosphere now is not conducive and the economic

constraints on Cameroonians now, including teachers, makes it difficult to convince these teachers to go to Yaoundé for the marking. We are just pleading that God grant you the wisdom and courage to accept this our plea and exercise magnanimity.

We would like to assure you as our brother, that when that is done, we shall do our best to appeal to the teachers to eschew bitterness and pain and respond to this sacred and noble patriotic challenge. We also promise to use our good offices to appeal to all our people in Buea and Bamenda to freely accommodate markers in our usual tradition of love and hospitality.

Your Excellency, leadership, especially in times like these, present us with formidable challenges. The way we respond to them will determine our place in history and before God, to whom we shall eventually give account.

We trust that God will bless you and we shall continue to raise our voices to Him in prayer for you.

Accept cordial greetings from the Moderator.

Signed:

Nyansako-ni-Nku

Synod Clerk, PCC

Chapter Four

CAPTAC at the Forefront of the Struggle to Redeem the GCE

On Tuesday September 14, 1993, the GCE examination answer sheets were taken captive, moved out of marking centres in Buea and Bamenda under cover of darkness and shipped in military trucks to Yaoundé. Ministry of Education officials, it appeared, were not willing to make any more concessions to the 'stubborn' TAC, declared illegal by Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe. As someone remarked (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 September 22 - 29, 1993 p.8), the worry for the Minister and his close collaborators was the fact that Anglophone Cameroonians were increasingly claiming independence by defying the only instruments known to the New Deal: fear and force. If Minister Mbella Mbappe saw this shameful act of cowardice as victory, the wave of indignation and widespread condemnation that swept through the entire Anglophone community, uniting them beyond politics, religion, tribe and Province, was to make him rethink, and perhaps to regret ever after. What follows is an account of how Mbella Mbappe's callous and brutish disregard for a cherished value: the Anglophone educational system, galvanised Anglophone parents, and placed them firmly behind TAC until victory was won.

The allegation that examination answer sheets had been smuggled out of the education delegations of Bamenda and Buea to Yaoundé at the dead of night on Tuesday September 14, was followed two days later by a Ministerial decision that shocked most Anglophones. On Thursday September 16, the government reversed, without explanation, its decision of September 10 to abolish the Yaoundé GCE marking centre, and to transfer all scripts to Buea and Bamenda. This volte-face was contained in an order signed by National Education Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe making Yaoundé the lone marking centre for the 1993 GCE. The reason for such an abrupt about turn, some have argued, was that the government might suddenly have realised that giving Anglophones autonomy in matters of the GCE could wet the appetite of radical Anglophones dreaming of secession.

Following this cancellation of the Buea and Bamenda

GCE marking centres, Anglophone Parent/Teacher Associations held an emergency meeting in Yaoundé, and issued the following release (*Cameroon Post* No. 182, September 22-29, 1993):

To Every Anglophone Parent

We are sure that Parents of Anglophone children have so far been following the manoeuvres of the Minister of National Education over the struggle of TAC and the Parent/Teacher Associations on the issue of restoring credibility to the GCE examinations. Credibility which has consistently and deliberately been abused by the government of La République du Cameroun as witnessed in 1984, 1987 and now 1993. Following the stalemate in June 1992, what has now become known as the Sondengam Commission, was created to divert the attention of TAC and the Parent/Teacher Associations.

We are all aware that the said commission drew up a blue print for the formation, operation and management of a decent Examinations Board which the Ministry of National Education has so eloquently proven its absolute incapability of handling. The renaissance of the issue of the Board this year to disorientate the attention of parents seems clearly now part of a bold agenda to mastermind and completely destroy the Anglophone system of education which represents the live line of our very existence and indeed, one of the foundation stones of our most cherished cultural heritage.

Within the short period of a week, the Yaoundé examination centre was suppressed by the Ministerial order and re-instated by another order of the same Minister as the only marking centre after the answer sheets had been stolen from the official marking centres of Buea and Bamenda by armed soldiers. With the transfer of the marking exclusively to Yaoundé, the stage is now set for the total destruction of the GCE Examinations.

Presently, adventurers mainly Francophones are being recruited to mark these examinations hitherto reserved for teachers who are specially trained and approved examiners. Some of the so-called Anglophone adventurers are themselves candidates of the examinations!

Through this letter, *All Parents* are hereby called upon to

exert pressure on Mr. Mbella Mbappe who since 1984 has been the ring leader of the group resolute on destroying the Anglophone system of examination. TAC, in all its power and foresight, has so far best presented and defended the wishes and need of a good examination system for Anglophones. *Let All Anglophones Now Rise Up As One Man And Defend The Future Of Our Children.* For as long as there is no functional board to cater for ALL Anglophone examinations, the fight *must continue.* We *Must Defend Our Right To Decide What Is Good For Our Children.*

Signed by all influential Anglophone groups

Another reaction, published in the same edition of *Cameroon Post*, came from concerned Anglophones in Tiko. It read:

We have for quite some time now been observing with keen interest the problems facing Anglophone examination in la République du Cameroun. We have equally been closely following up the wrangling between TAC and the Government of La République du Cameroon on this issue.

Until Wednesday September 15, 1993 utterances from both parties gave the impression that a solution was imminent and that TAC could soon give the green light for the grading exercise to start.

But the announcement on CRTV on September 16, 1993 to the effect that the 1993 GCE scripts are to be graded exclusively in Yaoundé was received with shock and consternation not only by Anglophones but also by a good number of Francophones who are willing to face reality.

We have also learnt that before the above announcement was made, The GCE scripts in both Bamenda and Buea had been secretly taken by military men to an unknown destination (probable somewhere in Yaoundé) where the authorities of la République du Cameroun plan to intimidate as many Anglophone teachers as they can find as well as hire students of the Higher Teachers Training college ENS Bambili and Yaoundé to illegally and haphazardly grade the scripts. This will of course

render the *Certificates Unrecognisable* the world over.

By announcing that the 1993 GCE scripts are to be graded exclusively in Yaoundé the authorities of La République du Cameroun are revealing two facts:

1. That they do not care about Anglophones and what they stand for, Anglophones are at best only second class citizens and at worst enemies in the house. Furthermore, they are unwilling to solve problems of Anglophones examinations because such examinations in essence are not supposed to exist in La République du Cameroun. Remember the decision to eliminate the GCE in 1983. Also witness what our technical school certificates have become CAP. What does CAP mean to an Anglophone?

If the GCE cannot be eliminated they will do everything possible to ruin the future of Anglophone children through it anyway, and by implication the very existence of Anglophones as a people. This explains why they must control the GCE rather than accept the wishes of Anglophones to create an Examination Board to oversee the proper organisation of all Anglophone examinations.

On the basis of the above observations, we warn that anybody, be it Anglophone or Francophone, who will participate in grading the 1993 GCE scripts without the official pronouncement of TAC on this issue will be doing so at his or her own risk.

We also wish to inform the authorities of La République du Cameroun that no force has ever been, nor will ever be stronger than the will of a people.

There is no turning back.

Done in Tiko this 17th day of September 1993.

From Limbe came this PTA resolution (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 September 29, 1993 p.10):

We the parents having taken great note of the prevailing impasse between Government and the Teacher's Association of Cameroon (TAC) concerning the end of course examinations, First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) and the General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE);

Considering the Minister of Education's contradictory decision recently on marking centres, and the insecurity of

examination scripts which the Minister shamelessly and unjustifiably declare;

Considering the importance quality education plays in the life of every society and the fact that the GCE is embedded in the cultural heritage of Anglophones;

- (1) Condemn the illegal movement of examination scripts to Yaoundé from Buea and Bamenda by unorthodox methods
- (2) Condemn government's nonchalant and foot-dragging attitude in seeking permanent solution to the problem of Anglophone examinations.
- (3) Totally condemn the Minister's intention of handing over examination scripts to unprofessional and unskilled markers such as Ecole Normale and University students or personnel from the Ministry of Education.
- (4) Abhor the non-validation of GCE examination certificate since 1990, making the functioning of the Board imperative.

We, further regret:

- a. That the Minister's attitude can be understandable because, as he unfortunately declares, he has no child studying in Cameroon.
- b. The Minister's declaration that papers were moved from Buea and Bamenda because of insecurity thus imputing that our government has ceased to guarantee security of Anglophones and their property.

We parents hereby resolve as follows:

That we unreserved support the stand of TAC in respect of the call for immediate creation by law of the Text of Application and the installation of the GCE Board in Buea, prior to the marking of the end of course examinations.

- Call of Government to take adequate measures such as prescribed by TAC to solve the impasse immediately in order to avoid an explosive situation, as we parents will not stand by to see the future our children and country jeopardised.

Done in Limbe this 19th Day of September, 1993

According to Ambassador Martin Epie Ekwoge, Chairman of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), in an interview with *Cameroon Post* (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 October 22-29, 1993 p.7), the theft of the GCE scripts from Bamenda and Buea, "simply means that we cannot, and should never celebrate victory until we have what we want in our hands. Also it indicates that Southern Cameroonians should learn to always take the actors of La République du Cameroun with a grain of salt. We are dealing with an animal which has no scruples. The government of La République du Cameroun will not concede anything except through the use of force. By stealing examination scripts, it is clear that the government of La République du Cameroun does not intend to create the Examination Board. We are wasting our time with them. La République du Cameroun has no interest in defending our educational system. They are intent on destroying it!"

Cameroon Post (CP): Mr. Chairman, the government has stolen the GCE scripts; parents are shocked, teachers are shocked. What does CAM intend to do about it?

Ambassador Epie Ekwoge (AMEE): Let us wait for a while so that the situation clarifies itself. Then we can advance. And I believe that the only way to advance is to have the parents of Southern Cameroons wake up and take their responsibilities. We may have to ask the people of Southern Cameroons to demonstrate their resolve to have the independent Board. Such demonstration would enable the AAC Standing Committee to step forward and moderate negotiations between the confederation of Parent/Teacher Associations and TAC.

CP: Do you mean CAM may ask for mass demonstrations?

AMEE: Maybe; but remember that demonstration does not necessarily mean going out physically to march. We have other forms of mass demonstrations which enable the leadership to gauge the opinion of Southern Cameroonians. And if we are led to call demonstrations,

we shall be targeting the leadership of TAC, the confederation of Parent/Teacher Associations and the AAC; we shall now not be demonstrating against the government. What is important now is that Southern Cameroonians should start thinking of stopping this game of hide and seek between government and TAC.

CP: Mr. Chairman, CAM seems to be developing very sophisticated and complicated methods. Why do we need demonstrations over this issue whereas virtually all parents of Southern Cameroons are determined to keep their children at home for one whole year because of the Board question? Why does the AAC not just go ahead and call the confederation of Parent/Teacher Associations and TAC to get the ball rolling?

AMEE: The activation of the Board created in April 1993 by TAC, in our opinion, will be a momentous decision. The entire National community should be aware of it. The international community must also be aware of it. If we demonstrate massively for the activation of our independent Board we will strengthen the AAC, the confederation of PTA's and TAC. But the rest of La République du Cameroon and the international community must be alerted to the collective resolve of the people of Southern Cameroons. That is why the demonstrations will be important. Let's wait and learn what details will come out of the theft of the scripts. We hear Anglophone members of government are at the base of the action. We want to know who they are and what their motives are. We want a complete picture of what has happened. Then we proceed. Meanwhile, we appeal to all Southern Cameroons to begin detaching themselves from the government grip over this issue and start thinking of an independent Board!

On its part, the AAC standing committee, through Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad, its Chairman, sent the following rebuke to Prime

Minister Simon Achidi Achu (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 September 22-29, 1993 p.8):

The Honourable Prime Minister and Head of Government of
The Republic of Cameroon, Prime Minister's Office, Yaoundé

Your Excellency,

We are extremely shocked to learn that you are part of the stage action we have been witnessing this week concerning the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations.

We understand that the suspension of the Yaoundé GCE centre, the re-establishment of the centre as the exclusive marking centre and the transfer of answer sheets from Bamenda and Buea under very dubious circumstances have all been done with your blessing.

Whereas we can excuse Mr. Mbella Mbappe for probably not knowing what he is doing we are at pains to think that somebody like you, who knows that the GCE is the foundation of the Anglophone cultural identity in this country can be associated with these attempts to ridicule the Anglophones.

We are by this letter informing you that until a functional Examination Board is created to take care of all our examinations which so far have been very badly managed by the Ministry of National Education, the Teachers Association of Cameroon, Parents Teachers' Association and all Anglophone parents will continue to resist the manoeuvres that you are masterminding.

Yours truly,

Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad

Chairman, AAC Standing Committee.

Alexander A. Taku (*Cameroon Post* No. 183 September 29 - October 6, 1993 p.11) compared the GCE crises to a time bomb and blamed government intransigence and lack of respect for the people's will. The Prime Minister, Mbella Mbappe and Peter Agbor Tabi of Yaoundé University, had conspired to steal away the examination scripts in order to thwart any agreement which would have guaranteed the autonomy of the Anglo-Saxon educational system. To break the impasse, "Mbella Mbappe must recognize that the hawks Peter Agbor Tabi and Simon Achidi Achu misled him, and come back to the negotiation table

with TAC.”

In a letter to the president of Cameroonian students studying in the USA, a letter intended to attract the sympathy of the international community, Mr. Janivarius Nkwaimbo Tabi, chairman of a group of concerned Anglophone parents in Yaoundé, lamented the cultural genocide perpetuated on Anglophones by the Francophone leadership in Cameroon (*Cameroon Post* No. 183 September 29, 1993 p.11):

Sir,

We, the Anglophone Confederation of Parents, Yaoundé Branch, meeting this 19th day of September 1993 in Yaoundé, wish to inform you as follows:

- that the government of “la République du Cameroun” is systematically destroying the GCE Examination and the whole essence of the Anglo-Saxon culture which constitutes the basis of our very existence,
- that this recalcitrant government is unwilling to create a functional Examinations Board(CEB) as requested by the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), a request which we strongly support,
- that if created following the proposed text which is now lying on the table of the Minister of National Education, this Board will eventually replace the corrupt and inefficient Department of Examination on matters pertaining to the organisation and correction of all Anglophone curricular examinations such as the GCE , RSA, City and Guilds, etc.
- that at the hour of writing, the examination scripts had clandestinely been transferred from the centres of Buea and Bamenda to an unknown destination, although persistent and unreliable official versions indicate that the examination is being marked in three different centres in Yaoundé, viz Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), for A levels, Lycée Bilingue d’Essos and Lycée Technique Nkolbissong for the O levels by inexperienced, dubious persons, mainly Francophones, etc.
- that two days since the correction exercise was due to

start, the above centres have been monitored and proven non operational.

In view of the above facts, we all believe now that “La République du Cameroun” through its long years of assimilation, manoeuvres and cultural genocide has pushed Southern Cameroonians beyond the tolerable limits. We must stand up like one man and fight back!

It is therefore, on the basis of this determination to fight back that we are inviting you to join us in the struggle by way of sensitising international opinion in the USA and elsewhere to bring pressure to bear on this dubious government and to cause it to create the desired Examinations Board.

A group of Anglophone parents and Elite in Bastos, Yaoundé, considered the Minister's decision and behaviour as “the greatest crime against Anglophones” (*Cameroon Post* No. 0183 September 29, 1993 p.10). They wrote:

At least most Anglophones were shocked and consequently had no good sleep on the night of Thursday 16th September, 1993 when it was announced over CRTV television news that Mr. Mbella Mbappe the Minister of Education had signed a decision that all June 1993 GCE Examination scripts at both levels will be marked in Yaoundé. This recent decision cancels his former decision in which he said that all the scripts will be marked only in Bamenda and Buea so as to reduce the financial burden on examiners.

Before he signed his most recent decision he had already arranged for the said scripts to be carried off by night from Bamenda and Buea with the complicity of the North West and South West Delegates of education, who should now be marked out and given the treatment reserved for traitors.

But, those who know Robert Mbella Mbappe and the hidden agenda of the Ahidjo-Biya governments to gradually and completely destroy the Anglophone culture and identity were however not shocked by Mbella Mbappe's decision. He has never been serious and honest in whatever thing he was doing with TAC, the Anglophone Parents and the Sondengam Commission. He always had his hidden agenda in mind and was merely pretending and buying time while planning

strategies and canvassing for support from other Francophones of his like and some Anglophones who have been bought over to betray our cause.

Robert Mbella Mbappe, a lawyer by training was Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé from 1970 to 1980 and while there he committed serious crimes and atrocities against the students, teachers and especially against Anglophone academic qualifications and system of education. He mounted obstacles against the recruitment of Anglophones into the University teaching core. Consequently he was forced out of the University by both Francophones and Anglophone students and teachers who made a coffin and carried out a mock funeral for him. Then while Minister of Education in the 1980's he again showed hatred for Anglophones and exhibited his determination to destroy their educational system. This explains why after many years as manager of a palm oil plantation he has been brought back to education so that he can complete their cherished task of destroying the Anglophone culture and education. The only qualification he has and for which the Biya government needs him in education is his stubbornness, brutality, hatred of Anglophones and his determination to destroy our roots and identity.

For us the issue is simple and straight forward. Shall we Anglophone Parents and teachers sit down and allow Mbella Mbappe to destroy the future of our children and the entire Anglophone culture? The war is now between us and Mbella Mbappe. By the way, who is Mbella Mbappe to be allowed to destroy a whole population of four million people and their generation? Is he an honest person who arranges for examination scripts to be carried away from Bamenda and Buea in the Night? Can such a character be trusted as one with any good intentions? The teachers are already doing their best in their own way to save us and our children. We should all with no exception throw our might and weight behind them so as to ensure that Mbella Mbappe and his supporters do not have their way. This is a matter of our culture and is therefore above party politics. Anyone who supports Mbella Mbappe in any way whatsoever is in support of the total destruction of Anglophone culture and Identity. There is no half way; that is the simple truth.

None of our Anglophone children, be they teachers or University students, will go to Yaoundé to mark the scripts. We in Yaoundé are already educating and warning those in Yaoundé and Douala against that. Anyone who does that is betraying the Anglophone cause and aiding Mbella Mbappe in the complete annihilation of all what the Anglophones stand for and want to defend. All Anglophone cultural and pressure groups, CAM, AAC and political parties are on the fight.

While the Association of North West and South West parents including some of us in Yaoundé will be leading a very powerful delegation to Mbella Mbappe, the PM and the President, all Anglophones are also called upon to support in various actions, demonstrations, newspaper articles etc, etc, etc.

Again, there is nothing as destructive to the Anglophones, their identity and culture, as what Mbella Mbappe is out to do.

He senses that he will be dropped during the next cabinet reshuffle and now wants to use his ugly and brutal ability to subdue the Anglophones to remain in the cabinet as a useful tool of the vicious regime. This should never be allowed to happen.

Please, please: All Anglophones - students, teachers, parents, political leaders - active and retired: This is a test case. If we are defeated in this, we are doomed for ever and ever and we shall never achieve anything in this country. What is demanded of all of us is concerted action. The ugly, bully Mbella Mbappe will not and shall not break our united front.

The GCE scripts must be brought back and marked in Bamenda and Buea and the Cameroon Examination Board must be created. This is the stand of all Anglophones and on this we shall all live or die.

This declaration was followed by an open Letter to Paul Biya from The Confederation of Anglophone Parents (CAPTAC) (Janivarius Nkwaimbo Tabi, *Cameroon Post*, No. 183, September 29, 1993 P. 10):

Your Excellency,

We Anglophone parents were shocked beyond belief that the Honourable Minister of National Education who ought to know

what marking and publishing of GCE results involves in terms of time would suggest that this process could be completed in 14 days.

The marking and publishing of GCE results takes at least 6 - 8 weeks. We have no wish to believe that the Honourable Minister of National Education is trying to equate the marking of the GCE to that of the baccalaureat (BAC) or other Francophone examinations.

We would like to state categorically that the GCE is not the BAC... It would be recalled that no Francophone examination has ever been marked in Buea or Bamenda. The Buea and Bamenda centres for the marking of the GCE should not be considered as a favour but just a birth right of all Anglophones.

It is outrageous to believe that when teachers teach a course for certification, unqualified person and even students are invited to evaluate the course content.

Inviting non-examiners to mark the GCE examination is clandestine and compromises the credibility of the certificates issued thereof.

It is an established fact that the GCE examiner must be one who is knowledgeable in the Anglo-Saxon system of education with a minimum qualification of a first degree or its equivalent, one who must be a practising teacher in Secondary/High School and must have undergone special training for the exercise.

The marking process involves the following steps.

- A. Thorough discussions of the marking schemes by all examiners during which modifications could be made where necessary.
- B. A selection of a random sample of scripts is taken for trial marking.
- C. Discussion of the marked sample scripts to harmonize disparities in the marks awarded for each question and script.
- D. At this stage examiners who are found to be inconsistent are asked to discontinue.
- E. The marking proper then begins during which each examiner is given a number of scripts to mark. In this process the moderators and chief examiners select marked scripts randomly from the examiners for

continuous moderation, assessment and standardization.

- F. Examiners who prove inconsistent and incompetent at this stage may also be asked to withdraw.

Given the above criteria in the process of marking the GCE, any departure from these established standards and procedures is inadmissible.

We therefore strongly condemn the present attempts by the authorities of the Ministry of National Education to circumvent these standards and procedures. We view this as an attempt to minimize our Anglo-Saxon system of education and ridicule the Anglophones.

We call on you as president of all Cameroonians to use all the powers at your disposal to stop this cultural genocide.

Done in Yaoundé on this 19th day of September 1993.

A few weeks later, on Sunday October 11, 1993, the eve of a demonstration that was to mark a turning point on the GCE struggle, CAPTAC Yaoundé issued the following press release:

The worst of our fears have come true. Government does not have any intention of creating and installing a functional Examination Board to handle Anglophone Exams.

How else does one explain the foot-dragging in signing the text of application of July 1 1993 Decree creating the GCE Examination Board? Definitely that decree was not sincere. How else does one explain the quite unreasonable and provocative transfer of the GCE scripts from Buea and Bamenda to Yaoundé? Definitely this was done to show Anglophones that their wishes do not count for much in Cameroon.

And the greatest cut of all, Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, Minister of Education and Mr. Titus Edzoa, Minister of Higher Education, both Francophones, and with the help of their Anglophone lackeys Mr. Teghen Yunga, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Nation Education and Mr. Peter Agbor Tabi, Rector of the University of Yaoundé I, have recruited unqualified and untrained Francophone mercenaries to mess up the 1993 GCE scripts. People who do not know any English, have no idea of the GCE syllabuses and have difficulty understanding the questions are being bribed to rush through scripts they definitely

cannot understand in a farce that is supposed to go for marking. As the saying goes, the worst fool is the one that knows not that he knows not! Indeed one Dr. Wilson Ebot of the University of Yaoundé I claims disdainfully that results will be out by the 21st of October, come what may! The rational for asking School Principals to bring mock GCE results to Yaoundé becomes obvious!

This last action confirms what many Anglophones have suspected all along: everything Anglophone is regarded by the Francophone dominated Government of Cameroon as at best second rate. The English Language, the Anglophone legal system, the Anglophone educational system, the GCE examinations, all Anglophone certificates and, indeed, the English speaking Cameroonians are held in total contempt. How else can Francophones think they can mark scripts for an examination they do not have the slightest idea about? How come the Cameroon Ambassadors to Britain, Nigeria and the USA have since independence been Francophones? Can someone imagine an Anglophone Cameroonian Ambassador to France? How come no Anglophone has since independence and unification in 1961 ever headed any of the really crucial Ministries (Defence, Territorial Administration, Secretary General at the Presidency, Finance, Foreign Affairs, National Education, etc?) How come so many Anglophones are disproportionately assistant so and so? How come the Government has not bothered to get University of London endorsement for the Cameroon GCE certificates since 1990? How come, how come...

We are either Cameroonian citizens 100 per cent or we are not Cameroonians. Our Anglophone values are as good as any and they are either accepted as being at par with the Francophone values or we have no place in this society.

There simply is no way we can accept the results of the farce that is being orchestrated by the Minister of National Education and cohorts. Whatever is being done by the Minister to the GCE scripts is null and void.

We demand that the scripts be marked or remarked by those qualified to do so, and until this is done we will keep our children at home.

To boycott classes, nursery, primary, secondary and

University, so as to obtain from our detractors an Examinations Board which should serve as a yard stick for an educational system that can train our youth to function properly and efficiently in society is sacrifice worth while.

Of course, we understand the hardships and suffering such a decision will cause to us parents and children alike. But the goal is worth much more and there isn't really any better option. After all, what do Cameroonian children have to show for earning secondary certificates and University degrees in the present clogged, rotten and completely corrupt educational system? Not much, unless, of course, one is born right or has had rightness thrust upon him by the bank accounts of relations.

Indeed, the parotic thing for English speaking Cameroonians to do right now is to keep the children away from school, for it is the only really peaceful way that can lead to a change of heart by our hitherto insensitive detractors towards the only real hope for laying down solid foundations for a prosperous English speaking Cameroonian community.

Tomorrow will be too late. We do not want to be another Bosnia, Georgia, Northern Ireland and what have you. And the only way to avoid this is to use the peaceful option: strike action, while this is still possible. Let us now! Let us act today or else tomorrow blood will flow! (Done in Yaoundé, this 11th day of October, 1993, Confederation of Anglophone Parents, representatives: Chairman, Secretary, Rapporteur.)

The following list of "traitors" was published under the heading of "Cultural Genocide" (*Cameroon Post* No. 0185 October 13 – 20, 1993 p.14):

Together With Their Francophone Masters Under Mbella Mbappe, The Secretaries Of States And The Rector Of Yaoundé I, Peter Agbor Tabi, The Following Are Destroying The GCE:

- 1) Dr. Edward Ako
- 2) Dr. John Lambo
- 3) Michael Nama
- 4) Claude Ndinge
- 5) Dr. Lemothian
- 6) John Ngongkum
- 7) Peter Atashili

- 8) Mrs. Eunice Ngongkum
- 9) Bridget Nuinuing
- 10) Mrs. Caroline Abetty
- 11) Mrs. Suzan Ogork
- 12 Dr. Wilson Ebot

Tension grew as the Minister wouldn't budge. Angers were rife and parents frustrated by the callous attempts to destroy their heritage and the future of their children. Anglophone parents threatened to withdraw their children from schools if government did not negotiate with TAC for the effective marking of the GCE. In Yaoundé a delegation of CAPTAC met Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe on October 7 and warned that they will not under any circumstances accept the results of a GCE marked by unqualified examiners. To this, the Minister replied that "he and the government are always right", that they wanted to restore the "authority of the state" and that they will "mark the GCE by all means". In response to this "provocative" stand of the Minister, CAPTAC warned that should the GCE be marked in a "chaotic way" parents were prepared to boycott the re-opening of schools in Anglophone territory until they are "sure that what their suffering children are doing in school will end up being genuine" (*The Herald*, No. 060, October 13-20, 1993 p.5).

CAPTAC organised meetings repeatedly to keep abreast with a worsening situation and to develop a common strategy to fight back. The first ever meeting in Yaoundé, attended by Mrs. Beatrice Wamey, Mr. Peter Nditafon and Mr. Peter N. Chateh, was organised on Saturday 17th September to plan out how concerned Anglophones in Yaoundé could play a more involved, active and consistent role in the struggle to salvage the GCE. The decision was taken to inform Anglophones by word of mouth on Sunday of a meeting built for Monday 19th September. Attendance at this first general meeting was 54. A total of 25 meetings was held by CAPTAC Yaoundé chapter from September 19, 1993 to February 21, 1994, in 7 of which registered attendance was each above 100: 102 on October 12 (the day parents demonstrated in front of the Ministry of National Education); 163 on October 14 (two days after publication of the "Inoni" order); 208 on October 15 (the day the "Achidi" text was

released); 305 on October 19; 266 on October 22 (three days before installation of Board chairman in Buea); 240 on October 29; and 401 on November 4 (the deadline CAPTAC gave Ministry of Higher Education to handover effective supervision of the marking of the GCE to the qualified markers). The president of CAPTAC Yaoundé chapter, Mr. Peter N. Chateh, in whose house CAPTAC held all its meetings, claims that it was almost impossible to write the names of everybody who attended a meeting. Usually, the crowd was such that penetrating it with pen and paper was Herculean; which is why he prefers to talk of registered attendance. Some of the meetings, both general and executive, lasted till 1 a.m., with participants working in various commissions, reading and approving everything before it was signed and dispatched.

The parents agreed that with the GCE being marked under unacceptable circumstances and by unqualified people, Anglophone parents should withdraw their children from all schools in the country until government yielded to their demands for the creation of a Cameroon Examinations Board (CEB) competent to handle the exams. The decision was to take effect from October 21, the day schools were scheduled to resume, and indicated their readiness to keep their children out of school for as long as it took the government to regain sanity. They were ready to resist the government in every way, especially as it was said that Messrs Kuma, Joseph Owona and Mbella Mbappe had sworn that an Anglophone Examination Board would only be created over their dead bodies. The parents were further infuriated by reports filtering out of the Ministry, that Mbella Mbappe had asked all principals of Anglophone schools to send the results of their mock GCE to Yaoundé. Although the intention of this was not clear, it was highly suspected that the Minister wanted to publish mock results as GCE results for the 1993 academic year. As a sign of their repugnance to the government's callous indifference, the parents unanimously agreed to demonstrate in front of the Ministry of National Education on October 12.

This communiqué was released by CAPTAC Yaoundé, following that decision:

To All Anglophone Parents, Teachers and Students; To All

Cameroonians Who Still Believe In a Bilingual Cameroon;

The Hour Is Dark!

Unqualified and Untrained Francophones Have Been Recruited By Government to Destroy the GCE Examinations Scripts Under The Pretext of Marking!

Clearly This Is Part of a Diabolic Plan by Government to Destroy the Anglophone Educational System in Cameroon as a Means to Total Assimilation.

We Cannot Allow This To Happen!

We Must Act Immediately. Be Ready To Handover Your Job To Francophones!

As A First Step, We Call On All Of You To Assemble At The Ministry Of National Education, P & T Junction On Tuesday, The 12th Of October, 1993 At 7 A.M. Prompt To Protest.

And it happened, just as planned; police brutality notwithstanding. Anglophone parents in Yaoundé turned out en masse to peacefully demonstrate at the Ministry of National Education over the GCE scandal. Mbella Mbappe (Rotcod Gobata in *Cameroon Post* No. 0186 20-27 October 1993 p. 5) “hid in his office, panicked and telephoned the troops. The troops arrived and, without asking any questions or issuing any threats, simply bombarded the parents with toxic water cannon and tear gas. Haba! Do you engage someone in a fight without the slightest quarrel?” But the parents were determined to make their point: that a people’s way of life, a cherished heritage, is not something to be toyed around with by uninformed but power-drunk nitwits. And with songs like the following, the parents were simply unstoppable.

Courage Brothers and Sisters/Do Not Stumble

1. COURAGE, brother do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night!
There's a star to guide the humble:
Trust in God, and do the right.
2. Let the road be rough and dreary,
And its end far out of sight,
Foot its bravely; strong or weary,
Trust in God, and do the right.
3. Perish policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light,
Whether losing, whether winning,
Trust in God, and do the right.
4. Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight,
Cease from man, and look above thee:
Trust in God, and do the right.
5. Simple rule, and safest guiding,
Inward peace, and inward might,
Star upon our path abiding
Trust in God, and do the right.
6. Courage, brother, do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night;
There's a star to guide the humble
Trust in God, and do the right

1. STAND up' stand for Jesus
Ye soldiers of the Cross'
Lift high His royal banner;
It must not suffer lose
From victory to victory
His army He shall lead;
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.

2. Stand up' stand up for Jesus!

The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day
Ye that are men, now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
Strength to strength oppose.

3. Stand up stand up for Jesus
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armour,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.

4. Stand up stand up for Jesus
The strife will not be long
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song
To him that overcometh
a crown of life shall be;
He with the king of Glory
Shall reign eternally

Dr. Paul Tan recounts what happened in an article titled "We Simply Refused to Budge" (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20 – 27, 1993 p. 4). This was not Dr. Paul Tan's first time in a demonstration to ask the government not to interfere with the GCE. Already, in 1983, he was one of those Anglophone university students "who braved all the odds, demonstrating defiantly against Francophone machinations spearheaded by one René Ze Nguele who attempted to introduce the Group GCE as a means of harmonising the GCE with the Francophone equivalents. The meticulous planning, sense of determination and of direction, the show of solidarity and the military precision with which the student protest of 1983 was mounted, forced the said Minister within days to perform a spectacular U-turn on a very tight one way street. This later cost him his job.

Not long after, another Minister, Ngango Georges, was ejected from the same position in more dramatic style still in connection with the GCE problem." He continues with his story:

"Exactly ten years after the University student protest of 1983, I again found myself at the doors of the same ministry of Education, demonstrating because of the same good old GCE issue, with the only difference that this time I was there as a parent. This quickly reminds me of the Eritrean war of independence in Ethiopia when children born in war time grew up to be old enough to go to the same war and then get killed in the process.

In spite of the genuine resolve with which we fought back in 1983, the accompanying infantile excitement probably prevented me from thoroughly assessing the impact and touchy nature of the event. But on the 12 of October, 1993, ten years after, I felt something. When I saw all around me the old grey haired parents, University lecturers, businessmen, housewives, University students and civil servants of all classes, all drawn from the northwest and southwest Provinces and all united by one common factor - their Anglophoneness, I felt something indescribable.

And when all of a sudden, the tyrant's agents appeared in their black ominous two horned water-spitting machine, I marked with extreme joy how the determined demonstrators, prostrate, crawling, grasping, clinging to one another, braved the odds and wallowed defiantly in the ensuring forced bath. The water cannon spat liquid like an angry aquatic dragon. The water was cold sir, but the piercing jet gave a hot sensation. Caps and head scarves flew in all directions, shoes were catapulted across the yard and fallen eyeglasses were crushed underfoot. But they all clung to each other, singing and shouting louder than before. You could have found yourself clinging unto the leg of a sworn life long enemy. Pa Kumfack, a retired police officer, who ten years ago was on the side of the battle line, was now on our side, receiving a good pounding from the water jet. The water jet came in my direction. I douched for cover and saw the jet hit one Dr. Fondo Sikod at knee level, suspending him in the air for a good while. At some point I myself got cornered by the water jet against the hard wall for about eight seconds. Whoever was pumping that water jet seemed to have recognised me as

that Taadom Saultan and surely hated me. My ribs still ache where that jet of water was laser beamed. The ordeal seemed like it would never end but one thing was certain: *We simply refused to budge*. Not a single lamb was going to be missing at the end of the storm. There seemed to be this large unseen hand of God that kept the flock together in spite of all the confusion. Then finally the water spitting machine wept. The last drops of water tearfully dripped from its trunk-like eyes in complete defeat, utter shame and surrender.

The booing, shouting and singing assumed fever pitch. The shock of the onlookers was evident. All naturally fleet footed frogs who would have beaten Ben Johnson's 100 metre sprint Olympic record only at the thought of a water cannon watched the spectacle spell bound behind the safety of nearby office windows.

As the shouting died down, I looked round and saw my friend Mr. Julius M. Wamey looking like a small stubborn pig. One of his shoes had been swept away in the stoma confusion but he had found it. Julius M. Wamey fumbled in his wet pockets for a lighter to light a cigarette. The lighter was water-filled and could not function. I recognised Dr. Verkijke Fanzo, the vice dean for the faculty of Letters only because I had known him since 1981. He was a pitiful sight; shabbier than a tramp; he might as well have been taking part in a mud slinging contest. His eye glasses were missing. Yet he was still spit fire, delivering the closing speech from the bonnet of a nearby truck as the riot police closed in. Mr. Cho Jack had been unlucky. The water jet had caught him straight in the eye and he had to be rushed to the hospital for serious medical attention. As we were ushered away, low grade gendarmes raised their rubber truncheons in the air and Dr. Tatah Mentan received a good thrashing on the back. But he refused to move. The tear gas followed. I saw women picking up unexploded tear gas canisters and hurling them back at the gendarmes. Then came a live grenade which one Mr. Tamba Elias grabbed and threw away before it could explode in our midst. It exploded in mid air with a deafening noise and a lovely fireball.

I remember, when the water cannon had gone away to be refilled with water, we all stood there like newly baptised Christians, dripping wet with the spirit of solidarity. It actually

felt good. At the height of that feeling I felt like crying but fought back the tears.

If you were an Anglophone parent in Yaoundé, aware of the planned demonstration and physically fit to attend but did not turn up, then where were you? You certainly missed something. If, in addition, you had also missed the AAC meeting back in April, then something must be wrong with you.

In whatever way this saga is going to end up, I now console myself with the thought and conviction that when we shall have been pushed to the wall sufficiently enough we shall go back to West Cameroon in one group (forget about the sell outs) having whatever obstacles on our way with the same togetherness and determination as I witnessed on October 12.

And Julius M. Wamey, in "Viva Aquam (I saw water)" (*Cameroon Post*, No. 0186, 20-27 October 1993 p. 8) had this narration to make:

I saw more water last Tuesday October 12 than I have ever seen on a non-rainy day. It was cold and violent and everywhere at once for a dreadful 15 minutes just after 9 a.m. in the front-yard of the Ministry of National Education.

I arrived the grounds of the ministry at about a quarter past eight to find that a huge crowd of Anglophone parents had already gathered there. They were holding up placards and singing such songs of hope as "We Shall Overcome", "Today May Be the Last Day" and "Courage Brother".

I passed through a cordon of policemen some of them recognised and saluted, thinking probably that I was there on assignment. It was on assignment alright but not the type they thought it was. I was there on assignment as an Anglophone parent of good standing, to meet other Anglophone parents like me so that, together, we could ask the government through National Education Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe, what they thought they were doing to the future of our children.

After chatting with some friends and colleagues for a few minutes I noticed that there was no TV camera about the place. I hurried over to the ministry of P & T where I asked to use a phone. I called CRTV, told my office where I was and then got connected to Serge Ngando Ntone, the assignment editor, and told him what was happening and where. He promised to send a TV crew right away and I went back to the demo. The crowd

had swelled to over a thousand and more were on the way. There were even more Francophones standing at a safe distance and watching. The windows of near-by buildings were spilling with curious faces.

By 9 a.m. excitement began to grow. A gendarme lieutenant in Land-Rover drove to-and-fro in front of us chattering excitedly into a walkie-talkie. In a few moments the water cannon truck was in sight. There was no officer with a megaphone in hand warning us to disperse or we would be sent away forcefully. We were a crowd of respectable and responsible parents, dressed in our best clothes and who had come to petition our government.

There were as many mothers as there were fathers in the crowd, right down to the front ranks. Yet without receiving our petition or asking us to leave peacefully, our government called down hell on us. The water can swung its twin nozzles at us and simply opened fire, or rather, water.

The effects were devastating. For a full quarter of an hour, our world was turned into a cold, wet, white and muddy place. People were shorn of their shoes, clothes and eye-glasses within seconds. I watched helplessly as one lady, on whom one of the jets of water had been concentrated, was being peeled out of her wrappers like an onion. When the other jet that had pinned some of us to the side of a truck slackened off, I started crawling forward to give her a hand. Some of our people followed me but as we started to rise and rush to her aid, the nozzle was swung in our direction. I turned my head away just in time but was immediately slammed between the shoulders by a blast of cold water that sent me sprawling on my face. I lost my shoes but hung on to my eye-glasses.

When the truck ran out of water and went away for more, we rallied round and cheered its departure. It was then that I saw the true Anglophone leaders in Yaoundé. Dr. Verkijke Fanzo, who carried the spurned petition and Chief John Agbor Tabi of Yaoundé Chapter of SWELA were cheerful leaders. So were such luminaries as Professor Asonganyi of CUSS, Mr. Thaddeus Kinga of MINDIC, Dr. Songwe, the NOCUD (Yaoundé) president and many more such luminaries. We rallied round, sat down in the mud and listened to Dr. Verkijke Fanzo confirming to us that our message had gone home. As we waited

for the next round of hostilities a Bamenda-bound Savannah Express bus drove slowly past. We stood up and cheered the passengers, asking them to tell the people back home that the fight was still going on.

And while we waited for our government to return with new torments for us I went looking for my wife. I had seen the wounds inflicted on some of us, especially Jack Cho whose eye was severely damaged, and I was anxious lest something had happened to her. I met her some ten minutes later, but apart from being as wet and muddy as I was, she was in one piece. I returned to my side of the crowd where I had left Tamfu Hansen Gandhi and Dr. Paul Tan and that was when the riot squad arrived. Tear gas canisters were being fired. Some were lobbed right back into the ranks of the ungodly. The wind was also against the police as it took the tear gas towards them. We did not disperse entirely but marched away slowly and with Anglophone dignity, singing our songs of hope and faith in the justice of our cause.

Mr. Nde Ningo walked back to his P & T office next door in his wet suit. Mr. Dzkashu drove back to the department of taxation, where he is a director, in his muddy clothes. I heard later his secretaries thought he had gone mad. Mr. Robert Kumfa, a former police commissioner for the city of Yaoundé and now boss of the American security firm, Wackenhut, came to the demonstration dressed in white gowns. He marched away with the bulk of the crowd looking distinctly brown and wet.

At the lake side below ENAM the marchers nearly ran into P M. Simon Achidi Achu, whose normal route to the office is usually through education. On that day the PM's car veered sharply to the right and sped off towards the CENER area. The marchers booed and jeered. They marched past ENS where those pretending to mark the GCE there called some choice rude names and continued towards Melen.

I got separated from the crowd at the education ministry by the gendarmes. Later I tried to take a taxi but after taking one look at my muddy attire, the drivers usually accelerated. It wasn't until an Anglophone taxi-driver recognised me and took me to Melen (free of charge) that I was able to meet up with my people again.

We stood around Liberty spot narrating our adventures

to those who did not attend when, at a few minutes after ten, a brand new Japanese saloon car drove down and stopped by us. From it's emerged the Centre provincial chief for National Security, Mr. Bana Bana, who is a six-star commissioner. With him was the commissioner for the 5th Precinct, Mr. Abdoulaye and two others I did not recognize. They shook hands politely with us and asked whether there was a quiet spot where we could sit down and discuss the events of the morning. We suggested Liberty sot and the policemen accepted readily enough.

Mr. Bana explained that all he knew about the GCE crisis was the official version but that after the events of the day he would like to know the background of the entire issue.

Coincidentally, we were mostly journalists there, so those doing the explaining were Hansen Ghandi (who used to cover education for the radio until someone higher up decided that he was too pro-TAC and was dropped), Zac Angafor who had just turned up, Mathias Achuo Che, Dr. Tan, Orlando Munjo and your humble servant. In the end the security chief praised the Anglophone demonstrators, through us, for the calm and dignity we had maintained in the face of serious provocation by the forces. He urged us to maintain the same attitude in the future. He then asked us to furnish him with our names and addresses which we did without any hesitation. He also asked for any documentation related to the GCE issue and later in the afternoon, a delegation of three, led by Dr. Verkijke Fanso, went to his office with documents that included the memorandum from the Bishops of Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province and our petition that was rejected that morning.

What impressed us the most with Mr. Bana Bana's attitude was the fact that for the close to two hours we sat with them he never once tried to make a connection between the GCE problem and politics for a pleasant surprise.

I now look back in anger on the day I saw water, not because I was soaked and rolled in the mud but because it was all unnecessary. Do we have to engage in a tug-of-war with our own government before we can obtain the least of our legal and God-given rights? Do we not have the right any more to help shape the future of our children but should forget it to a faceless, impersonal and unemotional institution called "the state"?

It might be that some Cameroonians, notably the Francophones, are willing the fate of their off-spring to "the state". But we, Anglophone parents, are ready and willing to sacrifice our jobs and our careers or even our lives to make sure that our children have a better future than our past. For this we are ready to see more water than we did on October 12.

When the government, instead of creating the board of examinations requested for, persisted in its recruitment of unqualified examiners to mark the GCE, the Confederation of Parent/Teacher Associations retorted by urging the Cameroon Anglophone Movement, CAM, to proceed with arrangements to reactivate the Cameroon Examinations Board created and launched in Buea on Friday April 16, 1993. This decision to hand over the struggle for the board to CAM, came after a stormy meeting with Minister Mbella Mbappe. It was a decision CAM chairman, Ambassador Epie Ekwoge, appreciated and endorsed wholeheartedly, promising that his Movement would continue to resist assimilation by the Francophone leadership and to fight for Anglophone autonomy through the restoration of the two state federation (*Cameroon Post* No. 185, October 13-20, 1993 p.14).

Even the University of London, disturbed by the way the government was handling the GCE crisis, wrote to Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe. According to *Cameroon Post* (No. 0187 October 27-November 3, 1993 p.8), the University as the vetting authority of GCE Examinations world wide, expressed concern over a number of issues plaguing the examination in Cameroon.

London's displeasure with Yaoundé over the GCE palaver was contained in a letter written by Dr. Woodthorpe and presented to the Minister of National Education, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe by the Chargé d'Affaire of the British Embassy, Richard Hamilton on Wednesday October 13. Though the contents of the letter were not made public, *Cameroon Post* gathered from authoritative sources that Dr. Woodthorpe had raised the issue of the security of this year's GCE scripts which were clandestinely transferred from Buea and Bamenda to Yaoundé.

He was also disturbed by reports of scripts being marked by unqualified persons thus raising doubt as to the academic weight of such certificates. Dr. Woodthorpe is also said to have

reminded the Minister in the letter, of his ministry's non-compliance with the terms of agreement entered into between London and Yaoundé on November 14, 1991.

Following the agreement, sample scripts of the GCE and question papers were to be constantly sent to London to ensure standards were maintained. The Ministry is supposed to provide London with complete sets of syllabuses, question papers, marking schemes, grade boundaries and selected scripts for this purpose. This agreement till date has remained paper work, as London since August last year, could not ascertain whether the GCE standards are the same.

Also, mention was made in the letter of the 612.28 pounds (FCFA 353 million) GCE fee still owed the University of London and whose payment arrangements have been ignored.

The consequence of the breach of this accord is that London has withheld the printing of blank certificates, input and checking of candidates' results data and also printing of individual certificates.

Reactions to Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe's Press Conference of October 19, 1993

On Tuesday 19th October 1993, Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe added insult to injury with a press conference at CRTV Mbella II. It was a performance that convinced even the doubting Thomases amongst the Anglophones to bury the illusion that a solution to the GCE problem could ever be initiated by Minister Mbella Mbappe Robert. As Rotcod argues in "L'heure est Grave" (*Cameroon Post* No. 0182 September 22 - 29, 1993 p.5), our educational system has completely collapsed, and we must not pretend that all is well, or that a solution could come from our current Minister of Education. For if Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe has distinguished himself in any way, it has been in blundering and shamelessness: "For four weeks running, the Minister has issued a decree each week directly contradicting the previous week's decree," all because his only real interest is to destroy the Anglophone educational system. "All Anglophones, including those who are both deaf and dumb in 'frog', must understand this. The period when fence-sitting and equivocations were possible is over. All hands must go on deck. Our very survival is at stake." The following reactions show with what indignation

Anglophones received the latest in the Minister's series of arrogant and ignorant statements on matters of Anglophone education.

CAPTAC Yaoundé replied with an open letter to the PM (*Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27 - November 3, 1993 p.8):

Your Excellency,

We followed with great interest the press conference given by the Minister of National Education, Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe on Tuesday, 19th October 1993 and view with deep concern the statements which he made concerning the Anglophone system of education in Cameroon.

Permit us to refer to a few of these light hearted statements uttered by our Minister of National Education.

1. The Marking of the GCE examinations

We are shocked and flabbergasted that the Minister totally ignored all the concerns of the Anglophone parents and Teachers about the qualifications and training of those presently involved in the so-called marking of the GCE examinations in spite of the fact that we have continuously reiterated that marking by such unqualified and untrained persons will obviously render our GCE certificates unacceptable to us Anglophone Cameroonians and to the outside world. He even went ahead to congratulate those he called Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonian markers, as if being a Cameroonian is enough qualification for marking the GCE. His declaration that acceptance of a GCE certificate is a matter of sovereignty confirms our fears that he has a hidden agenda to destroy the Anglophone system of education in this country by rendering it unacceptable to other countries to which Anglophone children usually turn for further studies.

His ridiculous assertion that Cameroon will refuse to recognise certificates from those countries that refuse to recognise ours can only lead to further exclusive victimization of the Cameroon Anglophone community. In fact, it is a well-known fact that Cameroon Technical and professional schools have never been open to Anglophone students. This means that if our GCE certificates are not acceptable abroad Anglophone

students will also have no access to technical and professional schools abroad.

Your Excellency will readily understand why Anglophone parents cannot accept this academic genocide.

2. Reopening of School

Contrary to Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe's declaration in a press interview published in the *Cameroon Tribune* of 14/10/93 that:

“De toute façon, les Anglophones, depuis trois ans, ont pris l'habitude de rentrer après les autres, à cause des problèmes du GCE” and despite the overwhelming evidence against the practicality of reopening Anglophone schools on 21/10/93, he went ahead to confirm this date as the reopening date for both Francophone and Anglophone schools. This ignores the fact that: (i) the GCE has yet to be marked by the same teachers who have to teach the children in school and (ii) without GCE O/L results there will be no student for Lower Sixth forms.

His selective concern for candidates to qualify for entry into Cameroon Universities in November explains to us the hysterical involvement of Mr. Peter Agbor Tabi, Rector of University of Yaoundé I in the current chaotic “marking” of the GCE.

We confirm that we are obliged to keep all our children at home until the more than 2500 teachers who have to mark the GCE have finished with the marking and gone back to their schools. It is in the interest of the Government to stop the Francophones and Anglophones of Robert Mbella Mbappe from further unnecessary destruction of the GCE scripts.

3. Appointment and installation of GCE Board in Buea

We completely disagree with his assertion that the appointment and installation of the GCE Board is not an urgent matter. Just in case he has not been attentive in the various meetings with parents and teachers and has not had the time to read the several communiqués, memoranda and letters from parents and teachers, we would like to reiterate emphatically our position that appropriate members of the Board must be appointed and installed in Buea as a matter of dire urgency since this is the only

question that will permit the Anglophone schools to reopen this year. His punitive sanctions and further threats in that regard against Anglophone teachers who have refused to participate in the masquerade that he is organising in the GCE marking centres, is not acceptable to us. We consider any covert or overt victimisation of Anglophones, as an attack on the entire Cameroon Anglophone community and he should be ready to bear the consequences of his actions.

Although the issue of the First School Leaving Certificate examination was not treated in his press conference, we would like to state that we consider the First School Leaving Certificate as important as the GCE to our Education System.

This is why we would like that your Excellency issues instructions for the urgent organisation and marking of the FSLC scripts as soon as possible by the usual competent markers.

We have learnt that at a meeting held in the Prime Minister's Office on Wednesday 13/10/93, a group that has nicknamed the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), "Teachers Against Cameroon", resolved to identify teachers who were called up to mark the GCE but refused to participate in the masquerade referred to above and victimized them by secretly tempering with their salaries in CENADI, leaving no traces of their vicious action, with deadly consequences for the victims. We understand the group plans to hold further meetings in the North West Province to perfect this diabolical plan of action. We hope that your Excellency will investigate this and take appropriate remedial action.

We count on your understanding and cooperation.

For and on behalf of CPTA Yaoundé

Peter N. Chateh (President); Professor Verkijika Fanso (Vice President); Professor Bole Butake (Secretary); Chief John Agbor Tabi (Adviser); Professor T. Asonganyi (Adviser); Dr. Tatngany (Adviser); Thaddeus Kinga (Adviser).

According to Rotcod Gobata (*Cameroon Post* No. 0187 October 27 - November 3, 1993 P.4):

Whatever Pa Achu's motives and intentions in his promises of a speedy solution to the GCE crisis, Robert Mbella Mbappe, his Minister of Education shattered all illusions created by the PM's promises on his televised press conference last

Wednesday. Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, better known unaffectionately as Petit Robert, put up a monster-piece theatre of sheer ignorance and crass.

There are limits to certain kinds of stupidity whether in government or out. Mbella Mbappe has now exceeded those limits.

He says you do not need to be an Anglophone to mark "A" Level Mathematics, that two plus two is four in any language. This is all true. Then Petit Robert goes ahead to state that the language of science is universal. Of course, it is, the idiot! The language of science is universal because the universal language of science is English. Ask any Japanese scientist, whose country has come up from behind in less than half a century to virtually dominate global science. In fact, let us ask any French scientist, none of whom would be caught dead presenting a scientific paper at any seminar in none than the Queen's own English.

Petit Robert further adds that Anglophone students have acquired the habit of returning to school late over the past three Years, so one more time would not matter. Thanks a lot. In another year or so we might have returned that old and sensible West Cameroon system of the school year beginning in January. Education! Secession would then be complete. That is, East Cameroon would have completely seceded from the rest of the Republic, education-wise.

Mbella Mbappe then went on to threaten the whole English-speaking world that Cameroon would not recognise diplomas or certificates issued by any of these countries that do not recognise those issued by Cameroon. So, sorry Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, etc. We cannot recognise your diplomas, Certificates and degrees, because they are obtained under dubious circumstances. These, incidentally, are also the countries that have garnered the greatest number of Noble prizes in both the science and the arts since the prize was created almost a century ago. Cameroon, following Petit Robert's logic, might soon stop recognising even the Nobel Prize.

The mere fact that at the time of writing this piece, Robert Mbella Mbappe is still a Minister in the government of Cameroon is proof of what many people have recently started to suspect: namely, that there exists a secret agenda for the cultural

genocide of the Anglophones in his country. It would be extremely unfortunate if Simon Achidi Achu were a willing party to such a scheme.

In an article titled "Provocative Press Conference", *Cameroon Post* (No. 0187 October 27-November 3, 1993 p.8) commented:

Instead of responding to the University of London that raised issues for clarification about the GCE, the Minister, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, in true Francophonie tradition, organised an indoor press conference aimed at ridiculing the Anglo-Saxon system of education.

And said he: "The GCE affair is an internal one that needs no outside interference. If any country does not recognise the certificates Cameroon will not also recognise theirs".

Mr. Mbella Mbappe, who is at the centre of the GCE melodrama, once told the Sondengam Commission that he had no child studying in Cameroon.

He also said in his outrageous press conference that science had no language and that was why Francophones were engaged in the marking exercise.

In the wake of TAC refusal to mark the GCE, unqualified Francophones and some Anglophones were contacted to mark the examinations.

The Confederation of PTAs and TAC have said that they will not recognise such certificates, and thus, London's concern.

Referring to Robert Mbella Mbappe as "The Greatest Underachiever of all Times", Ngowo Sama (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 3 - 10 November 1993 p.14) wrote:

As I listened painfully to Bobby's treatise on "Education Avancée du Renouveau", the question that kept racing through my mind was "how on earth did this nincompoop ever become Minister of Education for Christ's sake?" Jesus wept! Such absurdities from a Minister of Education, incredible!!! If Cameroon were a democratic country, this poor chap would have been sacked right after that press conference for embarrassing his government with such foolery and idiocy. Of course, we all know he is not the only one of his kind lurking around in the name of a Minister. Frankly, I have listened to a lot of rubbish in my time but this fellow must take the lead for being the greatest buffoon this century has produced yet. A

cursory look into his memoir reveals the most shocking scandalous trepidation. Take only his brief period as Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé, the milestones of his reign can be summarised as follows:

- (1) The Licence or Bachelor's degree was reduced from a four year training programme to three years without any provision for restoring both the quality and content of the courses.
- (2) The University stopped awarding certificates and began issuing attestations to its graduates instead. This action brought about untold hardship to the students in particular and the university on the whole. Problems abound from this decision. For example, the Anglo-Saxon countries found such attestations unsatisfactory and unsuitable for a higher institution of learning. The most noteworthy consequence that ensued from this erroneous hindsight was that it gave room for massive fraud which is prevalent to this day. Indeed, successive university administrators have benefited from this largesse by issuing diplomas to whoever could pay for them. It is an open secret.
- (3) His crowning achievement emanated from the CUSS diploma which got decertified by the Illinois Board of Medical Examiners in the late 1970s. This action by the Board featured in most newspapers in the United States and other western countries. You can imagine the damage done to the reputation of Cameroon, the University in general, and the medical schools (CUSS) in particular. Needless to mention the harm and injury inflicted upon the graduates of this establishment for not only were their diplomas worthless in the eyes of the world, but it also became almost impossible to pursue further studies in medical schools abroad. Now, one begins to understand Bobby's remark about diplomas being sovereign. My God, the fellow is unrepentant. He absolutely believes in his own verbal diarrhoea. Quite frankly, he is the only chap I know who behaves as though stupidity was a virtue.
- (4) Lastly, he was a chancellor who adored confrontation to dialogue and he thrived on the idea of imposing his will on others - be they colleagues, students or departments. Resistance abound to his colonial managerial style which left

him impervious and unperturbed to all and sundry. Ironically, it was this confrontational tendency and dictatorial attitude that finally caused his fall from grace and subsequent departure. Surely, most people vividly remember the sensational student demonstrations in Yaoundé which culminated into a mock funeral procession of Bobby. Frankly speaking, we have all seen strikes and students demonstrations before, but nothing quite as remarkable and macabre as that which brought out entire schools, colleges and university students against one man. In fact, a man who single-handedly could provoke so much passion and violence and who succeeded to unite all school children in Yaoundé against himself must be recognised and remembered for the devil he really represents.

This creature having failed once to destroy our youth, has re-emerged in the guise of a Minister of Education to complete his diabolic task. His singular objective remains unchanged - destruction of anything crystallising to intelligence. How cumbersome that a man of such poor standing, character and intellect could be allowed to go that close to academic matters!

To any true academician, the worth of one's diploma is measured by what others think of it and not what the holder believes it is worth. Only a megalomaniac like Bobby would ignore the views of his peers. According to this one time court clerk, (Renouveau's supreme authority on educational matters), diplomas are sovereign and intended solely for internal consumption, therefore, recognition by other countries was irrelevant. Rubbish! What next? Pretty soon, Bobby will be telling us that you can go to Law School and yet graduate with a diploma in medicine. In the meantime, his spoilt brats are supposedly studying in mother France. No doubt, when they return from outre-mer, assume they ever succeed in getting anything close to diplomas, we shall reject them outright for failing to meet the Cameroonian standards as Bobby suggested in his press meeting. As a matter of fact, what standards is he talking about anyway? Oh dear, I forgot the famous ZERO option - indeed, in this case zero standards. For once, the renouveaus is absolutely right!

The truth of the matter is that a system which is rigid

with standards produces a higher level of education and invariably a high calibre of graduates/workers who become internationally competitive and competent. On the contrary, a system like ours which is lax and sloppy, with hardly any standards (which Bobby proposes and insists on sustaining and maintaining in order to pull every one down to the level of mediocre and underachievers like himself) destroys real talent and intellect for any sustainable and meaningful capacity building which Cameroon badly needs. Whereas TAC on the other hand wants and has rightly been fighting for a system that allows for a competition so that those with potential and talent can excel and reach the heights of excellence and those who lack aptitude can quickly be identified and channelled towards appropriate and meaningful areas of competence.

Bobby obviously rejects the latter because he knows under such a rigorous regime with apparent high standards, he would never have attained the heights of a Minister. For he would have been identified long before he crossed the threshold of an office boy, let alone a court clerk and flushed down the sewage system for good. However, Bobby is not altogether stupid. Recognising his shortcomings and having the common-sense to appreciate the power of genetics, he immediately realised the underdeveloped genes he had passed on to his offspring - and knowing fully well that not even a French education can salvage them from becoming underachievers, he quickly devised a master plan to destroy our educational system, thereby hoping to handicap the future leaders of Cameroon to enable his brainless kids to feature once again at the top. God forbid! The bugger has to and must be stopped permanently.

By all indications and fairness, Bobby is painfully staging the final acts of desperate and untalented circus clown whose epic performance since the dawn of the last decade is nothing short of under achievement.

On the 21 of October 1993, CAPTAC Yaoundé branch wrote to all:

Anglophone school Proprietors
Anglophone Bishops, priests and Pastors
Anglophone Students and Parents
Cameroonians of Good will all over the Republic.

Their letter stated:

We wish to draw your attention to the letter of 10/2/77 written by the proprietors of the Protestant and Catholic Schools in the North West and South West Provinces on the creation of a Cameroonian General Certificate of Education Examination, to the Appeal of the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province of 25/9/93 on the GCE problem and Anglophone Educations System, to the Memorandum of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon dated 6/10/93 on the same subject matter, to the various letters, communiqués, memoranda of the Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC) and of parents in the North west and South west and other Provinces of the Republic and to restate that the war against the Anglophone system of education in Cameroon was intensified and rendered public by the Minister of National Education, Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, in his provocative and disastrous press conference of 19/10/93.

As Anglophones, you probably have also been keenly following with equal shock and consternation the GCE pandemonium which is threatening to destroy the Anglophone educational system and thereby mortgage the future of our children. Thanks to the action of TAC and Anglophone parents all over the national territory, a Text of Application to the Decree of 1st July 1993 has now been signed. But this remains only a Text on paper, and if past experience is anything to go by, and if the declaration of Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe in his press conference is taken at its face value, the problem remains where it was, unless we intensify our struggle. The education of our children is still in serious jeopardy.

If we do not rise up ourselves, who else will stand up for us? By this clarion call, we are especially inviting you to join us in the fight to save our educational system by *keeping your schools closed* until a satisfactory solution to the problem is arrived at through the appointment and installation of the GCE Board in Buea, the proper marking of the 1993 GCE scripts by qualified markers, and the rescinding of all sanctions meted out or threatened on our teachers who have refused to join in the on-going destruction of the GCE Examinations.

For and on behalf of the CAPTAC Yaoundé Branch

Peter N. Chateh
President

Professor Verkijika Fanzo
Vice President

Professor Bole Butake
Secretary

What follows are the two texts and the public's reaction, once more, to the chronic tendency in this government to be crooked and deceitful.

Chapter Five

The Board Is Here But...

Our is such a government of fakes and intriguers that the public needs a heavy dose of vigilance to deal with it. The Anglophone community has since learnt that nothing good comes easy, especially when government seems more of an enemy than an ally, or appears to have as mission, the destruction of the positive and the virtuous. As Professor Asonganyi ("*Cameroon Calling*" 17 October 1993) remarks, if there is any lesson to be learnt in conflict resolution, it is mainly a lesson for the government, which does not have to wait for citizens to be maimed, to be soaked with water, to lose their eyes, to be knocked by policemen and gendarmes, before it can listen to what the citizens are saying. Government must learn to listen to the people and act at the right moment to prevent the citizens from suffering too much before they are satisfied.

Within the framework of such an uncaring government, on October 12, 1993 when we learnt over CRTV of a text of application for the GCE board at last, it came as no surprise at all when soon afterwards it began to rumour that the text was a fake, and that an authentic one would soon be released. As Rotcod Gobata observes (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 20-27 October 1993 p. 5), "the GCE saga has brought out the ruling junta into the open day light in its stark nudity. Who again is still in doubt that this country is under the grip of a handful of terrorists who run state affairs with careless arbitrariness; with regard neither for consistency nor credibility nor decency? Cameroon is the only country on earth where the signature of the Prime Minister and Head of Government could be fraudulently secured for a false document and the document widely diffused over the mass media and nothing happens. Anywhere else heads would have rolled immediately."

What follows are the two texts and the public's reaction, once more, to the chronic tendency in this government to be crooked and deceitful in extreme.

Texts of Application of the July 1 Decree, 1993 on the GCE Board

- 1.) The “Inoni Order” or version made public on October 12, 1993, but later withdrawn by the PM as being incorrect (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20-27, 1993 pp. 12-13):

Order No. 112/PM of 12 October 1993

To Define and Determine the Administrative and Financial Organisation of the General Certificate of Education Board.

The Prime Minister, Head of Government
Mindful of the Constitution;

Mindful of Decree No. 92/245 of November 27, 1992 to organize the government, as amended by Decree No.93/132 of May 10, 1993;

Mindful of Decree No. 77/555 of 24 November 1976 instituting the General Certificate of Education examinations in Cameroon;

Mindful of Decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993 to create the General Certificate of Education Board;

Hereby Orders As Follows:

Chapter I

General Provisions

Article 1: This order determines and defines the administrative and financial organization of the General Certificate of Education Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Board”, created by decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993.

Article 2: The mission of the Board is that stipulated in decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993 referred to above.

Article 3: For the purpose of carrying out its objectives as specified in article 2 of this decree, the Board shall: (a) organize examinations for the award of certificates and other distinctions to persons who qualify; (b) offer technical advice on the design of learning programmes for secondary educational institutions; (c) collaborate with other organizations and institutions responsible for similar examinations in Cameroon and elsewhere; (d) conduct and contract research and studies on examinations and other aspects of education; (e) demand and

receive from any candidates sitting examinations such fees as shall from time to time be determined by the Board and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education; (f) enter into contracts, borrow, establish trusts, act as trustees solely or jointly with any other persons and employ and act through agents; in accordance with regulations enforced; (g) accept gifts, legacies and donations but without obligation to accept same for a particular purpose unless it approves the terms and conditions attached thereto; (h) undertake publishing and bookselling as approved by the Minister of National Education.

Chapter II

Powers of Supervision

Article 4: The Minister in charge of National Education shall be responsible for the supervision of the Board. In this capacity, he shall: (a) ensure that the school syllabuses respond to the exigencies of the social, cultural and economic development of the nation; (b) assure the standards of examinations; (c) approve and render executable the decisions of the Council of the Board, within a period of 15 (fifteen) days after reception. His silence after this period, will be taken as consent; (d) approve the syllabuses of all examinations organized by the Board; (e) sign along with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Buea and the Registrar of the Board all certificates established by the Board; (f) request the Council of the Board to examine any matters considered necessary.

Chapter III

Organs and Principal Officers of the Board

Article 5: The Board shall consist of: Council; Registrar; Examinations' Executive Committee; Division of Technical Services; Administrative Services.

Section I the Council

Article 6: The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the Board and shall be charged with the general control and superintendence of policy, finance and property of the Board. And as such shall: (a) propose the creation of examinations for the approval of the Minister in charge of National Education; (b) endorse academic decisions taken by the Examinations Executive Committee; (c) appoint Moderators and Chief

Examiners on the proposal of the Registrar; (d) ensure that proper accounts of the Board are kept and that the accounts of the Board are audited annually by an independent firm of auditors approved by the Minister in charge of Finance. This report shall be published annually.

Article 7: (1) The Chairperson of the Board shall be the Chairperson of the Council; (2) he shall be a knowledgeable and highly respected personality with experience in administrative and development matters; (3) he shall be appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic.

Article 8: The duties of the members of Council shall be free. However, members could be paid sitting and travelling allowances at such rates as may be fixed by the Council and approved by the Minister of National Education.

Article 9: (1) The Council shall comprise: (i) The Chairperson; (ii) The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea or his representative; (iii) One representative of the Presidency of the Republic; (iv) One representative of the Prime Minister's Office; (v) One representative of the Minister in charge of Finance; (vi) One representative of the Minister in charge of Higher Education ; (vii) Two Inspectors General of Pedagogy (Secondary General and Technical Education), (viii) The Director in charge of Examinations in the Ministry of National Education or his Deputy; (ix) Two representatives of parents; (x) Two representatives of teachers; (xi) Four representatives of the organizations of private education.

(2) Members of the Council should be persons with a thorough knowledge of the English educational system.

(3) Representatives of parents, teachers and private education shall be elected for a period of 3 (three) years renewable.

Article 10: (1) The quorum of the Council shall be two thirds of its membership and its decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of those present. In the event of a deadlock, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

(2) In the absence of the Chairperson at a meeting of the Council, the Council shall elect one of the members present, other than the Registrar, to preside over the meeting.

Article 11: The Council shall meet as and when necessary for the performance of its functions under this order. It shall meet

twice every year on the invitation of its Chairperson or at extraordinary sessions on the invitation of the Chairperson or by the written request of a simple majority of the members of the Council.

Article 12: The Chairperson of the Council may, on the recommendation of the Registrar, invite to a meeting any person whose presence is considered necessary in view of the items appearing on the agenda. Such persons shall attend only in an advisory capacity and shall be entitled to sitting fees and other benefits as the Council may decide.

Article 13: The Council may set up committees with the responsibility for making recommendations to it on matters pertaining to its functions under the provisions of this decree.

Article 14: The Registrar shall be the Secretary to the Council.

Article 15: The minutes of meetings of the Council shall be entered in a special register and signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary.

Section II: The Registrar

Article 16: (1) The Registrar shall be the Chief Executive of the Board and Chairperson of the Examinations Executive Committee;

(2) He shall represent the Board in all academic, civic, and legal matters.

Article 17: (1) The Registrar shall be a knowledgeable and highly respected personality with experience in administrative and educational matters.

(2) He shall be appointed by decree on the proposal of the Council and shall hold office for a period of 3 (three) years renewable.

(3) He shall be the Chief Executive of the Board and Chairperson of the Examinations Executive Committee.

Article 18: (1) The Registrar shall be the Authorizing officer of the budget of the Board. He may, on his responsibility, delegate his signature to any of his Deputy Registrars or to any Head of Service.

(2) He shall coordinate all the activities of the Board.

Article 19: The Registrar shall sign all Certificates issued by the Board along with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea and the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 20: All decisions taken by the Registrar in pursuance of his duties shall be confined to a written document which shall be duly signed, sealed, dated, numbered and entered in an appropriate register established for the purpose.

Article 21: It shall be the duty of the Registrar to ascertain that all matters pertaining to the administration of the Board are properly studied by appropriate committees before any decision is arrived at. Such committees shall be created and regulated by the Council.

Article 22: The Registrar shall be assisted by two Deputy Registrars who shall be responsible for administrative and technical matters respectively. The most senior Deputy Registrar shall act in his place when the office of Registrar is vacant or when the Registrar is, for any reason absent or otherwise unable to perform his functions.

Article 23: The Deputy Registrars shall be appointed by decree.

Article 24: (1) Directly attached to the Registrar shall be: The Mail Office; The Security Office; The Translation Office.

(2) Each of the Office referred to above shall be placed under the authority of an Officer eventually assisted by a Deputy.

Section III: The Examinations Executive Committee

Article 25: The Examinations Executive Committee shall be responsible for all academic matters. To this effect, it shall: (a) organize, control and promote examinations of the Board; (b) propose revisions to existing syllabuses to the Council for approval by the Minister in charge of National Education; (c) proclaim examination results; (d) conduct research projects regarding examinations; (e) provide the procedure and criteria for the appointment of Moderators and Chief Examiner by the Council; (f) provide the procedure and the criteria for the appointment of Examiners by the Registrar; (g) review all reports on examinations and report to the Council; (h) prepare and publish annual reports and statistics on all examinations of the Board; (i) organize conferences and training courses related to examinations; (j) make regulations regarding fraud and other examination malpractice.

Article 26: The Examinations Executive Committee shall comprise: (i) The Registrar (Chairperson); (ii) Two Inspectors General of Pedagogy; (ii) The Director in charge of Examinations

in the Ministry of National Education or his Deputy; (iv) Examination Officers; (v) Chairpersons of Examinations Subcommittees; (vi) Two Subject Moderators; (vii) Two Chief Examiners. Article 27: The Chairperson of the Examinations Executive Committee may invite to a meeting any person whose competence is required in view of specific points on the agenda.

Article 28: The Deputy Registrar in charge of Examinations shall be the Secretary of the Examinations Executive Committee.

Article 29: The Examinations Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year upon a predetermined calendar prepared for each school year. It may meet in extraordinary sessions on the invitation of the Chairperson.

Article 30: The quorum of the Examinations Executive Committee shall be a simple majority of its membership.

Article 31: (1) The Examinations Executive Committee shall constitute Subcommittees and Subject Panels for Each Examination.

(2) Each Subcommittee shall comprise: (i) The Deputy Registrar in charge of Examinations (Chairperson); (ii) Moderators; (iii) Chief Examiners.

Article 32: Each Subject Panel shall comprise: (i) Moderator (Chairperson); (ii) Chief Examiners; (ii) Assistant Chief Examiners.

Article 33: Invited persons may participate in meetings of Subcommittee and Subject Panels on the invitation of the Registrar.

Article 34: The duties of the members of the Examinations Executive Committee shall be free. However members could be paid sitting and travelling allowances at such rates as may be fixed by the Council.

Article 35: There shall be, under the authority of the Registrar, Examinations Officers responsible for: (i) General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Examinations; (ii) General Certificate Advanced Level Examinations.

Chapter IV

Division of Technical Services

Article 36: Placed under the authority of one of the Deputy Registrars, the Division of Technical Services shall be responsible for the management of the technical services of the Board. To

this effect, it shall make sure that the conditions of materials are in the best state to permit the processing of examinations and the production of administrative materials.

Article 37: The Division of Technical Services shall comprise: Computer Service; Printing Press; Research and Publications Service; Library and Documentation Service.

Article 38: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Computer Service shall be responsible for automating examination and administrative processes.

Article 39: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Printing Service shall be responsible for all printing works of the Board.

Article 40: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Research and Publications Service shall be responsible for the conduct of research regarding examinations and syllabuses and preparing all publications for the Board.

Article 41: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Library and Documentation Service shall be responsible for the Library, Archives and documentation of the Board.

Chapter V

Administrative Services

Article 42: The Administrative Services shall comprise: the Administrative and Personnel Service; the Finance Service.

Article 43: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service and eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Administrative Service shall be responsible for administrative and personnel matters.

Article 44: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Finance Service shall be responsible for the budget and the management of finances of the Board.

Chapter VI

Financial Regime

Section I General Provisions

Article 45: The financial management of the Board shall be handled according to regulatory provisions provided for by the

State for all Public Corporations.

Article 46: The financial year of the Board shall cover a period of twelve months beginning 1st July and ending 30th June of the following year and shall comprise all the total expenditure and resources of the Board.

Article 47: The authorizing Officer of the budget of the Board shall be the Registrar or his representative.

Article 48: The property of the Board shall be public property. The accounts of the Board shall be at the disposal of the State Control Services.

Section II Structure of the Budget

Article 49: The resources of the Board shall be as provided for in article 4 of decree No. 93/172 of 1 July 1993.

Article 50: Examination fees which make up part of the budget of the Board shall be determined by the Council and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 51: The acceptance of donations and legacies shall be approved by the Council and endorsed by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 52: Loans to the Board shall be approved by the Council and authorized by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 53: The expenditure of the Board shall comprise: recurrent budget; investment budget.

Section III Preparation and adoption of the Budget

Article 54: The Registrar shall prepare the budget and present same for adoption by the Council.

Article 55: Any additional budget shall in like manner be presented by the Registrar and adopted by the Council at the same time as the financial statement is presented by the Treasurer.

Article 56: The organs and authorities involved in the financial management of the Board shall be: The Council; the Authorizing Officer; the Treasurer; the Financial Commission.

Article 57: (1) Transfer of credits from article to article and from paragraph to paragraph shall be authorized by the Registrar of the Board.

(2) Transfer of credits from chapter to chapter shall be authorized by the Council.

(3) Transfer of credits from the investment to the recurrent

budget is forbidden.

Section IV Authorities Executing the Budget

Article 58: (1) The Council has powers to manage the finances and property of the Board. As such, it shall: vote the budget within the limits of available means; authorize the acquisition and disposal of fixed assets; adopt the administrative accounts of the Authorizing Officer and the management accounts of the Treasurer.

(2) The Council shall also approve all requests for loans in favour of the Board.

Article 59: (1) The Registrar shall execute the budget on his responsibility. He shall spend the credits and order expenditure and payments.

(2) He can by decision delegate his signature to one or more persons of his choice who will act on his authority and personal responsibility.

(3) The specimen of signature of the Authorizing Officer and his representative shall be deposited with the Treasurer.

Article 60: On behalf of the Board, the Registrar shall sign all enactments, contracts, conventions and tenders in accordance with existing laws and regulations and shall proceed to establish revenue receipts, payments and commitments which he shall transfer to the Treasurer.

Article 61: (1) The Registrar shall, upon the approval of the Council, be authorized to operate an interest account.

(2) He may, after the approval of the Council, designate intermediate officers under his control and under his responsibility, to make certain expenditures. He may at any time replace such officers.

(3) The decisions designating these officers shall be sent to the Treasurer for his opinion.

Article 62: The Registrar shall establish administrative accounts at the end of every fiscal year retracing all operations. This report shall be submitted to the Council during its very first meeting after the end of the budget year in question. The Council shall approve the accounts.

Article 63: The Board shall maintain bank accounts into which monies derived from the recurrent and investment budgets shall be deposited.

Article 64: The Treasurer shall run bank accounts for

operations relating to: collection of fees and revenue; payments of allowances; acquisition of documents, equipment and scientific and technical materials; research expenses; out of station allowances; insurance; salaries; any other duly authorized expenditure.

Article 65: (1) Bank accounts shall be credited through transfers, on the orders of the Registrar and effected by the Treasurer.

(2) Cheques and bank or postal orders must be signed jointly by the Registrar or his representative and the Treasurer.

Article 66: (1) The collection of revenue and the payment of expenditure of the Board shall be made by the Treasurer. He alone shall handle funds and assets, and be responsible for their custody. He shall also be responsible for the accuracy of the figures.

(2) The Treasurer is personally responsible before the Council for all his financial and accounting operations.

Article 67: (1) The Treasurer of the Board shall be appointed by the Minister in charge of Finance.

(2) He shall be expected to make a security deposit in conformity with the regulations in force.

Article 68: (1) The Treasurer shall receive and pay orders issued by the Registrar.

(2) He shall be personally responsible for the collection of debts of the Board and also make payments authorized by the Registrar within the limits of available funds.

Article 69: (1) Payment orders established for expenditure and documents produced for their justification must have the total amount stated in figures and in words.

(2) All errors must be initialled by the originator of the error.

Article 70: (1) On receiving any payment order the Treasurer shall diligently assure its payment at the earliest opportunity.

(2) The powers of the Treasurer shall be limited to examining the regularity of payment. He shall not judge the necessity or reason for the expenditure by the Authorizing Officer.

Article 71: Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 66 and 68 above, the Treasurer cannot suspend payments, except in the following cases: absence of/or inadequacy of funds; over expenditure; doubt of the validity of the bill; absence of

justification that services were rendered; omissions, errors or irregularity in the presentation of bills.

Article 72: (1) In the case of refusal of payment, the Treasurer must inform the Authorizing Officer immediately of the reasons for such refusal.

(2) The Authorizing Officer could then order the Treasurer in writing, in which case he takes the responsibility off him. In such a case the Treasurer is obliged to execute his instructions immediately.

Article 73: Bills shall be handled according to regulatory provisions governing stores management.

Section V Financial Commission

Article 74: It is hereby created a Financial Commission responsible for verifying the regularity of financial operations of the Board. In this regard, the Commission shall: receive copies of all financial decisions concerning the Board; send to the Authorizing Officer and Council any observations which it considers useful in establishing the irregularities that have been found. It can then proceed to make investigations in order to establish its observations; send a biannual report to the Council, the Minister in charge of National Education, the Minister in charge of Finance and the State Control Services on the financial management of the Board.

Article 75: The Financial Commission of the Board shall comprise 3 (three) members: one representative of the State Control Services (Chairperson); one representative of the Minister in charge of Finance (Member); one representative of the Minister in charge of National Education (member).

Article 76: The advantages allocated to members of the Financial Commission shall be fixed by the Council.

Chapter VI

Final Provisions

Article 77: (1) The Board shall have direct access to the personnel of the National Education system to perform such duties as the organization of examinations might entail.

(2) Conditions on remunerations for such services shall be fixed by the Council.

Article 78: Services rendered by teachers to the Board shall

be taken into consideration for purposes of career advancement.

Article 79: The running of the affairs of the Board shall be governed by regulations approved by the Council. These regulations shall cover: General and Personnel Management; Financial Regulations; Security; Handling of examination materials within the Secretariat.

Article 80: The printing press, the computer services and other sections of the premises of the Board shall be designated sensitive areas and shall be inviolable except on court order.

Article 81: (1) The organization and functioning of the Services and Offices created by this order shall be determined by the Council and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education.

(2) The organization and functioning of the Offices of the Treasurer shall be determined by a special enactment.

Article 82: (1) The Services and Offices provided for in this decree shall be progressively put in place as and when the need arises by decision of the Council.

(2) Heads and Deputy Heads of Services and Offices provided for in this decree shall be appointed by an order of the Minister of National Education on the recommendation of the Council.

Article 83: The advantages attached to positions in the Board shall be determined by a special enactment on the recommendation of the Council.

Article 84: The Council shall order a review of the activities of the Board every three years by experts, one of whom shall be from a foreign Examinations Board.

Article 85: All provisions contrary to the present Order, especially those of decree No. 76/555 of 24 November 1976, are hereby abrogated.

Article 86: The Minister of National Education and the Minister of Finance are responsible, each in his own sphere, for the implementation of this Order.

Article 87: This Order shall be registered and published according to the procedure of urgency and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French.

Yaoundé, 12 October 1993.

Simon Achidi Achu.

- 2.) The “Achidi Text” or version made public on Friday 15 October 1993 after the one above was withdrawn by the PM as being incorrect.

Order No. 112/CAB/PM of 12 October, 1993 to Define and Determine the Administrative and Financial Organization of the General Certificate of Education Board

The Prime Minister, Head of Government,

Mindful of the Constitution;

Mindful of Decree No. 76/555 of 24 November 1976 instituting the General Certificate of Education Examinations in Cameroon;

Mindful of Decree No. 92/245 of November 27, 1992 to organize the government, as amended by Decree No. 93/132 of May 10, 1993;

Mindful of Decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993 to create the General Certificate of Education Board;

Mindful of Decree No. 92 92/244 of November 25, 1992 to appoint the Prime Minister, Head of Government;

By Delegation of the President of the Republic;

Hereby Orders As Follows:

Chapter 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1: This Order determines and defines the administrative and financial organization of the General Certificate of Education Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Board”, created by decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993.

Article 2: The mission of the Board is that stipulated in decree No. 93/172 of July 1, 1993 referred to above.

Article 3: For the purpose of carrying out its objectives as specified in article 2 of this Order, the Board shall:

- (a) organize examinations for the award of certificates and other distinctions to persons who qualify;
- (b) offer technical advice on the design of learning programmes for secondary educational institution;
- (c) collaborate with other organizations and institutions responsible for similar examinations in Cameroon and elsewhere;
- (d) conduct and contract research and studies on examinations

and other aspects of education;

(e) demand and receive from any candidates sitting examinations such fees as shall from time to time be determined by the Board and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education;

(f) enter into contracts, borrow, establish trusts, act as trustees solely or jointly with any other persons and employ and act through agents in accordance with regulations in force;

(g) accept gifts, legacies and donations but without obligation to accept same for a particular purpose unless it approves the terms and conditions attached thereto;

(h) undertake publishing and bookselling as approved by the Minister of National Education.

Chapter II

POWERS OF SUPERVISION

Article 4: The Minister in charge of National Education shall be responsible for the supervision of the Board. In this capacity, he shall:

(a) ensure that the examinations respond to the exigencies of the social, cultural and economic development of the nation;

(b) assure the standards of examinations;

(c) approve and render executable the decisions of the Council of the Board, within a period of 15 (fifteen) days after reception. His silence after this period, will be taken as consent;

(d) approve the syllabuses of all examinations organized by the Board;

(e) sign along with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Buea and the Registrar of the Board all certificates established by the Board;

(f) request the Council of the Board to examine any matters considered necessary.

Chapter III

ORGANS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Article 5: The Board shall consist of:

Chairperson of the Board;

Council;

Registrar;

Examinations Executive Committee;

Division of Technical Services;
Administrative Services.

Section I

The Chairperson of the Board

Article 6:

- (1) The Chairperson of the Board shall be the Chairperson of the Council of the Board.
- (2) He shall be a knowledgeable and highly respected personality with experience in administrative and development matters.
- (3) He shall be appointed by decree of the President of the Republic.

Section II

The Council

Article 7: The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the Board and shall be charged with the general control and superintendence of policy, finance and property of the Board. And as such shall:

- (a) propose the creation of examinations for the approval of the Minister in charge of National Education;
- (b) endorse academic decisions taken by the Examinations Executive Committee;
- (c) appoint Moderators and Chief Examiners on the proposal of the Registrar;
- (d) ensure that proper accounts of the Board are kept and that the accounts of the Board are audited annually by an independent firm of auditors approved by the Minister in charge of Finance. This report shall be published annually.

Article 8: The duties of the members of Council shall be free. However, members could be paid sitting and travelling allowances at such rates as may be fixed by the Council and approved by the Minister of National Education.

Article 9: (1) The Council shall comprise:

- i. The Chairperson;
- ii. The Vice-chancellor of the University of Buea or his representative;
- iii. One representative of the Presidency of the republic;

- iv. One representative of the Prime Minister's Office;
- v. One representative of the Minister in charge of Higher Education;
- vi. One representative of the Minister in charge of Finance;
- vii. Two Inspectors General of Pedagogy (Secondary General and technical Education);
- viii. The Director in charge of Examinations in the Ministry of National Education or his Deputy;
- ix. two representatives of parents;
- x. Two representatives of teachers;
- xi. Four representatives of the organizations of private education.

(2) Members of the Council should be persons with a thorough knowledge of the English educational system.

(3) Representatives of parents, teachers and private education shall be elected for a period of 3 (three) years renewable.

Article 10:

- (1) The quorum of the Council shall be two-thirds of its membership and its decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of those present. In the event of a deadlock the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- (2) In the absence of the Chairperson at a meeting of the Council, the Council shall elect one of the members present, other than the Registrar, to preside over the meeting.

Article 11: The Council shall meet as and when necessary for the performance of its functions under this decree. It shall meet at least twice every year on the invitation of its Chairperson or at extra-ordinary sessions on the invitation of the Chairperson or by the written request of a simple majority of the members of the Council.

Article 12: The Chairperson of the Council may, on the recommendation of the Registrar, invite to a meeting any person whose presence is considered necessary in view of the items appearing on the agenda. Such persons shall attend only in an advisory capacity and shall be entitled to sitting fees and other

benefits as the Council may decide.

Article 13: The Council may set up committees with the responsibility for making recommendations to it on matters pertaining to its functions under the provisions of this decree.

Article 14: The Registrar shall be the Secretary to the Council.

Article 15: The minutes of meetings of the Council shall be entered in a special register and signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary.

Section III

The Registrar

Article 16: (1) The Registrar shall be the chief executive of the Board and Chairperson of the Examinations Executive Committee.

(2) He shall represent the Board in all academic, civic and legal matters.

Article 17: (1) The Registrar shall be the Authorizing Officer of the budget of the Board. He may, on his responsibility, delegate his signature to any of the deputy Registrars or to any Head of Service.

(2) He shall coordinate all the activities of the Board.

Article 18: The Registrar shall sign all certificates issued by the Board along with the Vice-chancellor of the University of Buea and the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 19: All decision taken by the Registrar in pursuance of his duties shall be confined to a written document which shall be duly signed, sealed, dated, numbered and entered in an appropriate register established for the purpose.

Article 20: It shall be the duty of the Registrar to ascertain that all matters pertaining to the administration of the Board are properly studied by appropriate committees before any decision is arrived at. Such committees shall be created and regulated by the Council.

Article 21: (1) The Registrar shall be a knowledgeable and highly respected personality with experience in administrative and educational matters.

(2) He shall be appointed on the proposal of the Council and shall hold office for a period of 3 (three) years renewable.

He shall have the rank of Director of Central administration.

Article 22: (1) The Registrar shall be assisted by two Deputy Registrars who shall be responsible for examinations and technical services respectively. The Deputy Registrar in charge of examinations shall act in his place when the office of Registrar is vacant or when the Registrar is, for any reasons, absent or otherwise unable to perform his functions.

(2) Deputy Registrar(s) shall be appointed on the recommendation of the Council and shall have the rank of Deputy Director of Central Administration.

Article 23: (1) Directly attached to the registrar shall be:

the Mail Office;

the Security Office;

the Translation Office.

(2) Each of the Offices referred to above shall be placed under the authority of an Officer.

Section III

The Examinations Executive Committee

Article 24: The Examinations Executive Committee shall be responsible for all academic matters. To this effect, it shall:

(a) organize, control and promote examinations of the Board;

(b) propose revisions to existing syllabuses to the Council for approval by the Minister in charge of National Education;

(c) proclaim examination results and award corresponding certificates;

(d) conduct research projects regarding examinations;

(e) provide the procedure and criteria for the appointment of Moderators and Chief Examiner by the Council;

(f) provide the procedure and the criteria for the appointment of Examiners by the Registrar;

(g) review all reports on examinations and report to the Council;

(h) prepare and publish annual reports and statistics on all examinations of the Board;

(i) organize conferences and training courses related to examinations;

(j) make regulations regarding fraud and other examination malpractice.

Article 25: The Examinations Executive Committee shall comprise:

i) The Registrar (Chairperson);

ii) Two Inspectors General of Pedagogy;

iii) The Director in charge of Examinations in the Ministry of National Education or his Deputy;

iv) Examination Officers;

v) Chairpersons of Examinations Subcommittees;

vi) Two Subject Moderators;

vii) Two Chief Examiners.

Article 26: The Chairperson of the Examinations Executive Committee may invite to a meeting any person whose competence is required in view of specific points on the agenda.

Article 27: The Deputy Registrar in charge of Examinations shall be the Secretary of the Examinations Executive Committee.

Article 28: The Examinations Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year upon a predetermined calendar prepared for each school year. It may meet in extraordinary sessions on the invitation of the Chairperson.

Article 29: The quorum of the Examinations Executive Committee shall be a simple majority of its membership.

Article 30: (1) The Examinations Executive Committee shall constitute Sub-Committees and Subject Panels for each examination.

(2) Each Sub-Committee shall comprise:

i) The Deputy Registrar in charge of Examinations

- (Chairperson);
- ii) Moderators;
 - iii) Chief Examiners

Article 31: Each Subject Panel shall comprise:

- i) Moderator (Chairperson);
- ii) Chief Examiners;
- iii) Assistant Chief Examiners.

Article 32: Invited persons may participate in meetings of Sub-Committee and Subject Panels on the invitation of the Registrar.

Article 33: The duties of the members of the Examinations Executive Committee shall be free. However, members could be paid sitting and travelling allowances at such rates as may be fixed by the Council.

Article 34: (1) There shall be, under the authority of the Registrar, Examinations Officers responsible for the following:

i) General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Examinations:

- a) Officer in charge of General Education subjects;
- b) Officer in charge of Technical and Commercial/Business Education subjects.

ii) General certificate of Education Advanced Level Examinations:

- a) Officer in charge of General Education subjects;
- b) Officer in charge of Technical and Commercial/Business Education subjects.

(2) In accordance with the provisions of Article 3 (c) above, an Examination Officer may be appointed to handle foreign examinations.

Chapter IV

DIVISION OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

Article 35: Placed under the authority of one of the Deputy Registrars, the Division of Technical Services shall be responsible for the management of the technical services of the Board. To this effect, it shall make sure that the conditions of materials are in the best state to permit the processing of examinations and the

production of administrative materials.

Article 36: The Deputy Registrar in charge of the Division of Technical Services shall be a computer specialist, appointed by an order of the Minister in charge of National Education on the recommendation of the Council.

Article 37: The Division of Technical Services shall comprise:

- Computer Service;
- Printing Press;
- Research and Publications Service;
- Library and Documentation Service.

Article 38: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Computer Service shall be responsible for automating examination and administrative processes.

Article 39: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Research and Publications Service shall be responsible for the conduct of research regarding examinations and syllabuses and preparing all publications of the Board.

Article 40 [Missing]

Article 41: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Library and Documentation Service shall be responsible for the Library, archives (script library, confidential storage of questions and examination records) and documentation of the Board.

Chapter V

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Article 42: The Administrative services shall comprise:

- the Administrative and Personnel Service;
- the Finance Service.

Article 43: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service and eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Administrative Service shall

be responsible for administrative and personnel matters.

Article 44: Placed under the authority of a Head of Service eventually assisted by a Deputy, the Finance Service shall be responsible for the budget and the management of finances of the Board.

Chapter VI

Financial Regime

Section 1

General Provisions

Article 45: The financial management of the Board shall be handled according to regulatory provisions applicable to Public Corporations of administrative nature.

Article 46: The financial year of the Board shall cover a period of twelve months beginning 1 July and ending 30 June of the following year and shall comprise all the total expenditure and resources of the Board. By way of exception, the first budgetary year shall commence on the date of coming into force of this Order.

Article 47: The authorizing Officer of the budget of the Board shall be the Registrar or his representative.

Article 48: The property of the Board shall be public property. The accounts of the Board shall be at the disposal of the State Control Services.

Section II

Structure of the Budget

Article 49: The resources of the Board shall be as provided for in article 4 of decree No.93/172 of 1 July 1993.

Article 50: Examination fees which make up part of the budget of the Board shall be determined by the Council and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 51: The acceptance of donations and legacies shall be approved by the Council and endorsed by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 52: Loans to the Board shall be approved by the Council and authorized by the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 53: The expenditure of the Board shall comprise:
 recurrent budget;
 investment budget.

Section III

Preparation And Adoption Of The Budget

Article 54: The Registrar shall prepare the budget and present same for adoption by the Council.

Article 55: Any additional budget shall in like manner be presented by the Registrar and adopted by the Council at the same time as the financial statement is presented by the Treasurer.

Article 56: The organs and authorities involved in the financial management of the Board shall be:

- the Council;
- the Authorizing Officer;
- the Treasurer;
- the Financial Commission

Article 57: (1) Transfer of credits from article to article and from paragraph to paragraph shall be authorized by the Registrar of the Board.

(2) Transfer of credits from chapter to chapter shall be authorized by the Council.

(3) Transfer of credits from the investment to the recurrent budget is forbidden.

Section IV

Authorities Executing the Budget

Article 58: (1) The Council has powers to manage the finances and property of the Board. As such, it shall:

vote the budget within the limits of available means;
authorize the acquisition and disposal of fixed assets;
adopt the administrative accounts of the Authorizing Officer and the management accounts of the Treasurer.

(2) The Council shall also approve all requests for loans in favour of the Board.

Article 59:

(1) The Registrar shall execute the budget on his responsibility. He shall spend the credits and order expenditure and payments.

(2) He can by decision delegate his signature to one or more persons of his choice who will act on his authority and personal responsibility.

(3) The specimen of signature of the Authorizing Officer and his representative shall be deposited with the Treasurer.

Article 60: On behalf of the Board, the Registrar shall sign all enactments, contracts, conventions and tenders in accordance with existing laws and regulations and shall proceed to establish revenue receipts, payments and commitments which he shall transfer to the Treasurer.

Article 61:

(1) The Registrar shall, upon the approval of the Council, be authorized to operate an interest account.

(2) He may, after the approval of the Council, designate intermediate officers under his control and under his responsibility, to make certain expenditures. He may at any time replace such officers.

(3) The decisions designating these officers shall be sent to the Treasurer for his opinion.

Article 62: The Registrar shall establish administrative accounts at the end of every fiscal year retracing all operations. This report shall be submitted to the Council during its very first meeting after the end of the budget year in question. The Council shall approve the accounts.

Article 63: The Board shall maintain bank accounts into which monies derived from the recurrent and investment budgets shall be deposited.

Article 64: The Treasurer shall run bank accounts for operations relating to:

- collection of fees and revenue;
- payments of allowances;
- acquisition of documents, equipment and scientific and technical materials;
- research expenses;
- out-of-station allowances;
- insurance;
- salaries;
- any other duly authorized expenditure.

Article 65:

- (1) Bank accounts shall be credited through transfers, on the orders of the Registrar and effected by the Treasurer.
- (2) Cheques and bank or postal orders must be signed jointly by the Registrar or his representative and the Treasurer.

Article 66:

- (1) The collection of revenue and the payment of expenditure of the Board shall be made by the treasurer. He alone shall handle funds and assets, and be responsible for their custody. He shall also be responsible for the accuracy of the figures.
- (2) The Treasurer is personally responsible before the Council for all his financial and accounting operations.

Article 67:

- (1) The Treasurer of the Board shall be appointed by the Minister in charge of Finance.
- (2) He shall be expected to make a security deposit in conformity with the regulations in force.

Article 68:

- (1) The Treasurer shall receive and pay orders issued by the Registrar.
- (2) He shall be personally responsible for the collection of debts

of the Board and also make payments authorized by the Registrar within the limits of available funds.

Article 69:

(1) Payment orders established for expenditure and documents produced for their justification must have the total amount stated in figures and in words.

(2) All errors must be initialled by the originator of the error.

Article 70:

(1) On receiving any payment order the Treasurer shall diligently assure its payment at the earliest opportunity.

(2) The powers of the Treasurer shall be limited to examining the regularity of payment. He shall not judge the necessity or reason for the expenditure by the Authorizing Officer.

Article 71: Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 62 and 64 above, the Treasurer cannot suspend payments, except in the following cases:

absence of/or inadequacy of funds;

over-expenditure;

doubt of the validity of the bill;

absence of justification that services were rendered;

omissions, errors or irregularity in the presentation of bills.

Article 72: (1) In the case of refusal of payment, the Treasurer must inform the Authorizing Officer immediately of the reasons for such refusal.

(2) The Authorizing Officer could then order the Treasurer in writing, in which case he takes the responsibility off him. In such a case the Treasurer is obliged to execute his instructions immediately.

Article 73: Bills shall be handled according to regulatory provisions governing stores management.

Section V

Financial Commission

Article 74: It is hereby created a Financial Commission responsible for verifying the regularity of financial operations of the Board. In this regard, the Commission shall:

receive copies of all financial decisions concerning the Board;

send to the Authorizing Officer and Council any observations which it considers useful in establishing the irregularities that have been found. It can then proceed to make investigations in order to establish its observations;

send a bi-annual report to the Council, the Minister in charge of National Education, the Minister in charge of Finance and the State Control Services on the financial management of the Board.

Article 75: The Financial Commission of the Board shall comprise 3 (three) members:

one representative of the State Control Services (Chairperson);

one representative of the Minister in charge of Finance (member);

one representative of the Minister in charge of National Education (member).

Article 76: The advantages allocated to members of the Financial Commission shall be fixed by the Council.

Chapter VI

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 77: (1) The Board shall have direct access to the personnel of the National Education system to perform such duties as the organization of examinations might entail.

(2) Conditions on remunerations for such services shall be fixed by the Council.

Article 78: Services rendered by teachers to the Board shall be taken into consideration for purposes of career advancement.

Article 79: The running of the affairs of the Board shall be governed by regulations approved by the Council. These regulations shall cover:

General and Personnel Management;

Financial Regulations;
Security;
Handling of examination materials within the Secretariat.

Article 80: The printing press, the computer services and other sections of the premises of the Board shall be designated sensitive areas and shall be inviolable except on court order.

Article 81: (1) The organization and functioning of the services and Offices created by this Order shall be determined by the Council and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education.

(2) The organization and functioning of the Offices of the Treasurer shall be determined by a special enactment.

Article 82: (1) The Services and Offices provided for in this Order shall be progressively put in place as and when the need arises by decision of the Council.

(2) Heads and Deputy Heads of Services and Offices provided for in this Order shall be appointed by an order of the Minister of National Education on the recommendation of the Council and shall have the same rank as their counterpart in Central administration.

Article 83: The advantages attached to positions in the Board shall be determined by a special enactment on the recommendation of the Council.

Article 84: The Council shall order a review of the activities of the Board every three years by experts, one of whom shall be from a foreign Examinations Board.

Article 85: All provisions contrary to the present Order, especially those of decree No. 76/555 of 24 November 1976, are hereby abrogated.

Article 86: The Minister of National Education and the Minister of Finance are responsible, each in his own sphere, for the implementation of this order.

Article 87: This Order shall be registered and published according to the procedure of urgency and inserted in the Official gazette in English and French.

Simon Achidi Achu
Prime Minister

REACTIONS

As *Cameroon Post* (No. 0186 October 20-27, 1993 p.12) observed, many legal minds have raised the question to know why an administrative act such as Order No. 112/PM of October 12, 1993 signed by the Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu should be 'withdrawn' and 'replaced' on Friday October 15, 1993 with another Order bearing the same number and date, as in Order No. 112/PM of October 12.

It must be understood that 'whatever mistakes' the Order published on October 12 carried, it was an act of law which carries the power of law until it is repealed or annulled. In all administrative texts cited prior to the Order published on October 15, no mention is made of a repeal, annulment or abrogation of the Order published on October 12. Which of these two orders is registered in the Official Gazette? Is it not possible for administrators concerned to go into the application of the first, in total ignorance of the second? Or, is it a question of a 'nuance juridique'?

On page 10 of the same edition of *Cameroon Post*, Patrick Ndikum Tanifom talks of: "Inoni's Order Versus Achidi's Order". According to him:

If there is any reason why there has been some quasi acceptance of the text signed last October 15 (Achidi text) as opposed to the total and spontaneous rejection of the one issued and read over CRTV two days before (Inoni Order), it is the mere fact that, Anglophones saw in it some relative show of good faith and signs that government is beginning to be reasonable. The two texts apart from a few inconsequential differences, are basically the same. However, one of the articles, 34 in the Achidi text and 35 in the Inoni order, contains the most fundamental and meaningful difference between the two. While the article in the Inoni order made absolutely no mention about reforming technical and commercial examinations in the

Anglophone school system, which since the imposition of CAP has remained the nightmare for students of technical and commercial education, the second text mentions it in its article 34. It states: "There shall be under the authority of the Registrar, Examination officers responsible for the following:

- (1) General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Examinations
 - a. Officer in charge of General Education subject;
 - b. Officer in charge of Technical and commercial Business Education subject;
- (2) General Certificate of Education advanced Level Examinations:
 - a) Officer in charge of General Education subjects;
 - b) Officer in charge of Technical and commercial/Business Education subjects."

The article also states in sub section 2, that "... an Examination Officer may be appointed to handle foreign examinations." Though not explicit, foreign examinations can immediately be interpreted to mean examinations such as City and Guilds, RSA, LCC, etc. which much to the chagrin of the Anglophone community, was scrapped by government. This aspect, was also absent from article 35 of the Inoni order which simply stated: "There shall be, under the authority of the Registrar, Examinations officers responsible for: (i) General Certificate of Education ordinary level examinations; (ii) General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Examinations.

Also, in both content and form, the board according to the text of application, remains a far cry from what TAC and Anglophones have been clamouring for. This is evidently so because the prescriptions of the text point to the creation of a purely government examination agency with a tinge of cosmetic differences. The nature of appointments to positions of responsibility by presidential decree or prime Ministerial orders do not also help matters. Article 45 makes no pretence as to government's intention to keep the board under close supervision by "The Minister of National Education". Article 45 also states: "The financial management of the board shall be handled according to regulatory provisions applicable to public corporations of administrative nature."

Furthermore, articles 3, 7, 8, 18, 24, 36, 51, 52, and 63

clearly show the amount of powers government through its Ministers will wield over all others in the board. However, subsection (2) of article 9 states: that members of the council which shall be the supreme governing body of the board should be persons with a thorough knowledge of the English educational system. This implies therefore, that, the plague which has been the bane of Cameroon's troubles, notably the tendency for thorough strangers to the working of a particular system, always forcing themselves into decision making positions in such systems would not be the lot of the board.

To Ebssiy Ngum ("*Cameroon Calling*" 17 October 1993), who considers the signing of the text of application as "a milestone in the struggle to put this country on its rails", and as proof of Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu's "openness" and love for "dialogue", "the final signing of an order defining the functioning of the GCE board, reveals how much trouble our governors like. Since it finally cost a lot in terms of socio-political stability and why not the maintenance of law and order to come this far." Much of our "culture of violence is avoidable", if our government were only ready to show a little understanding to the plight of the governed, he concludes.

Cameroon Calling of 17 October 1993 was in the main devoted to reactions by Anglophones to the signing of the texts of application. Paul Wain Ngam presented the following sample of Anglophone opinion in Yaoundé, following publication of the genuine text of application:

Opinion 1: I listened to the text as it was read over the radio and I am convinced that this is probably what we the teachers wanted. And I believe that the TAC executive, and particularly Mr. Andrew Azong Wara who represent us, will accept that this is really what we wanted to have. I have also talked to many people and they are happy: the parents, teachers, and students, have given me the impression that that is really what they wanted.

Paul: And what next?

Opinion 1: I will like to thank the PM and also to ask that he

shouldn't delay to appoint the members of the GCE board, so that they begin work immediately for the 1994 GCE examinations. Given that it is almost getting late, if work can begin early enough the better. He should realise that there will be a lot for the members of the board to do for the 1994 GCE to be effectively carried out.

Opinion 2: I think it is about time we start asking the people in government if they have a very firm grasp of the situation in this country. I think the one question we should ask now especially to those in government is: was it worth it? There is an economic, a social and political price to pay for the delay. Let's say the board has been signed and the teachers will eventually start marking, it is going to take at least between 4 to 6 weeks to get the GCE marked, and the cost of that to the children who wrote the GCE is astronomical. And I think somebody should get the people in government to pay for this delay, because it is all their fault. They want to play politics with issues that are apolitical. The education of the Cameroonian child should be important to these people in government. It isn't a political issue, so people should stop playing politics with vital issues like education.

Paul Wain Ngam: What next, now that the text has been signed?

Opinion 2: I will have to wait for the reaction of TAC. But from a first reading, a very first and hasty reading of it, I think the essential has been achieved in that Anglophones will eventually take care of the board. Well, there are certain clauses that are debatable, for example: that which says that the Minister of finance should be in charge of the resources. That is debatable because we all know that the person who controls the finances virtually controls the nerve centre of the board. I think TAC should look into that.

Opinion 3: As a parent, I think that the government has realised that there is an issue which is very pertinent as far as the Anglophone system of education is concerned. We are happy to have got what we wanted.

Opinion 4: I read through the text and have my own reservations. One, why should the text be dated the 12th, while it was broadcast yesterday 15th? All in all, I think that it is a good beginning. And if it has taken the Anglophone community all this while to make the administration realise that they should actually have done a thing, I think that the administration too has just started and they have quite a long way to go to make us believe that they are sincere in what they are doing. I would want that after this creation, they should go ahead and permit us, we who have been fighting, to have a complete say in the formation of the board, to make proposals about who should be appointed. There is a clause which says the chairman will be appointed by presidential decree; it may be that the person finally appointed is not really someone we want to have there. So if they could permit us to give them the proposals before they can go there and confirm it, we would be very grateful. We already know who are the competent authorities, because there are some people who are versed in the educational system more than others. If the President sits up there, he can sign the decree, but does he know exactly who knows what in the educational system? No. So they should give us the say, because we already know from past experience who is capable of doing what. It is not enough to say that there are people who advise the President on educational matters; for there is quite a difference getting the information through an intermediary and getting it yourself. Secondly, our problem was not financial; it was only to maintain the level of the GCE, the reputation about it. So if they really want it to be as it has always been, they should send the

scripts back either to Buea or to Bamenda. We will mark them. And I am sure, after sounding their opinion, they are ready to feed the markers and let them mark without putting any constraints on government to pay allowances.

Ebssiy: We also met a PhD candidate, Mr. Augustine Ngong Kiteh who is a teacher by profession and a GCE marker with 16 years experience. He has done a paper in the area of education values and evaluation. He explains his work in the light of this struggle that is now yielding quite some fruits.

Kiteh: In this article, I have considered that having passed through the Anglophone educational system, I have realised that this system has educational values which are supposed to be transmitted to the younger generation. And unfortunately, it is believed that the teachers' association of Cameroon has come out to fight a battle for excellence in education, but it has been misinterpreted by the honourable Minister of national education as being part of a political party. But I believe that whatever a value is, any one who supports that particular value should be willing to stand up and defend it because he understands that there is some goodness, some truth, some beauty in what he admires. And the Anglophone educational system, all of us Anglophones are aware of it, the beauty of it, the truthfulness of it, the goodness of it, and we are prepared to stand up and defend this against all odds. What is the political aspect in it, I don't understand.

Wain: The other day people were peacefully demonstrating, saying that they had taken unqualified and untrained Francophones to be marking the GCE. Now you are a teacher, do you think that a Francophone can be able to mark the French done at the GCE even though he is a Francophone?

Kiteh: I believe that the Francophone is not qualified to mark the

Cameroon GCE. Although the Francophone is French speaking, he is not even qualified to mark the French written by Anglophones; the reason being that marking GCE is not like measuring a physical quantity. It has something to do with educational evaluation. Which means being aware of the degree of error. An error in education is not considered an error as such as it would be considered in physical measurement. If a piece of metal is one metre long or one cm long, it is easy for everybody to measure it. But measurement in education has a problem. For example, if I have 100 apples in my hand, and ask the question what have I? If you say I have 100 apples, you might not be considered to be intellectually capable as someone who says oh, you have very large hands, because only very large hands should contain 100 apples. So measuring in education also has an element of error which can only be appreciated by teachers.

Wain: Now they have signed the text, when you go to mark now, will you mark those scripts which the Francophones have marked.

Kiteh: To be candid, marking will not be complete if the scripts that are marked by Francophones are not marked again by Anglophone examiners. All those scripts have to be remarked by Anglophone examiners. Otherwise, if anything is done without remarking the scripts that have been marked by the Francophones, the marking exercise will not be complete.

Wain: You are used to marking the GCE. What exactly do you do before you finally settle down to correcting the scripts?

Kiteh: Before we begin correcting the scripts, we have what is referred to as trial marking. This implies looking at different papers, marking them and discussing the problems that we might face in eventual marking with each other. Then we come up with marks and we

compare the differences in the allocation of marks. If the difference is too large, any particular examiner who came up with that large difference is asked to reconsider why these marks were attributed to this question and not to this other question. Then he too readjusts and knows that maybe he was too kind or too severe; and then everybody is advised to keep up with some particular standard. Each examiner, even if you have marked for 12-15 years, there is always something new to learn.

Wain: The role of the Chief examiner.

Kiteh: The chief examiner is there to call the attention of examiners who have the tendency of giving too many marks or too less mark. He is an experienced examiner, and is said to be a wiser colleague than all the other colleagues. His role is there to bring to mind or to correct the excesses of the examiners. He goes through most of the scripts corrected. He does some kind of sample; he picks scripts up randomly from particular examiners. He has in mind that some examiners are not very good, and he tries to be with those examiners to work with them, to bring them up to the level that they are supposed to have. And this might take quite sometime. And that is why some examiners are dismissed after a marking exercise, because they have failed to live up to expectation.

Ebssiy: Well, we are lucky that the national executive of TAC was around for follow-up dialogue with the authorities. TAC is certainly a household word already, it doesn't sound like an acronym again. The secretary general, Mr. Sammy Arrey Mbi, gives his reaction to that text.

Mbi: The text that was signed on Tuesday afternoon gave us a lot of worry. When I immediately contacted sources close to the PM, we were assured that there was some mistake and that a new text was going to be given us in less than 24 hours. When we had a meeting at the Longla college with parents at precisely 11.30 a.m., the PM's emissary came in,

Dr. Peter Abetty, with the new text promised us by the PM a few ours back. And to our greatest joy, we found that a lot of work had been done overnight to modify that bogus one that had been signed in the afternoon of Tuesday. I can assure you, we are, as a group of technicians, very, very overwhelmed with that text; it is an excellent text. Our worry will be on those who will be made to implement the text.

Wain: After the signing of that text, what next?

Mbi: Our demands have always been very logically put. We had said we wanted a text of application to the decree of 1st July. Now that that text has been signed, along with that we had said we want the scripts sent back to Bamenda, and members of the board named and installed in Buea. And marking will begin. I think that is the way it is as at now.

Wain: When you said you were not going to mark the 1993 GCE until all your conditions were met, some teachers are known to have been marking. What will be your relationship with these teachers when finally the board is installed and the scripts taken back to Bamenda and Buea.

Mbi: You see, to be very candid, the real examiners of the GCE had all stayed away from the marking centres. Those we have presently marking, be they Professor of Yaoundé University or whatever charlatans you may call them, have never actually marked the GCE. And so when the real people will appear on the scene, the charlatans will scare off. And obviously, since most of them have actually never been markers, I don't think they will ever find themselves in any marking centre when the board shall have been installed in Buea.

Wain: What if you discover that some teachers, actually those who have been marking the GCE were involved?

Mbi: They know what to do to themselves. They just honourably have to withdraw because we have been fighting for something better, but they have been trying to perpetuate an evil on us. So they will just have to withdraw honourably.

Wain: When one looks at a certain memo you sent to the PM at one time, there you talked about the GCE board with all other examinations falling under the board. But there are some people who still think that you were asking for a Cameroon Examination Board. Can you throw some clarification on the name.

Mbi: Oh well, as we have always said, there isn't anything wrong in a name. There is nothing wrong in a name. You could even call it First School Leaving Certificate Board, but as long as it carries everything we want, we really don't quarrel with the name. What really happened is that towards the end of the deliberations of the Sondengam commission in November last year, it was, for purposes of convenience thought that the GCE board that we initially started with could be called Cameroon Examination Board. But soon after this project was presented to government, we realised that some other people who had nothing to do with the GCE were already gunning for positions in this Cameroon Examinations Board - you know, Cameroon, it must be for everybody. The technicians immediately realised that they had made a mistake. So they had to limit it to GCE board, because you know, when it is GCE board, only special people who concern themselves with the GCE will have something to do with it. GCE Board, no problem about it; we accept the name.

Wain: So many people in Cameroon came to know TAC just because of this GCE problem. Can we say now that when the crisis will be over TAC will cease to exist?

Mbi: It is true TAC was born out of the crisis emanating from the GCE, but now that we have realised that there is a lot TAC can do for the true educational system of our children in this

country, I think it has come to stay. There are lots of things TAC will do. Presently we are working on a code of conduct for teachers. We are also looking at the new syllabuses that will be examined at the GCE board that has been created. Believe me yours, TAC has just started and there are lots and lots of things in the pipe line.

Wain: You are in Yaoundé because you came for a meeting with the authorities. What has been the result of that meeting?

Mbi: This meeting, I regard it as a follow-up to the one we had with the PM in Bamenda almost two weeks ago. I can assure you it was a very fruitful meeting. Maybe when we go round to sensitize teachers, we would come to really discuss this more.

Ebssiy: We realise that TAC is discussing with the PM and not with the Minister of National Education. Can you explain to us how this dialogue shifted from the Ministry of National Education to the PM's office?

Mbi: It is rather unfortunate that TAC should be dealing directly with the PM rather than with the Ministry of National Education. There has been really a breakdown of communication between our Ministry and TAC. On the 19th of August, he openly declared that TAC is illegal. TAC was recognised only by the Ministry of Territorial Administration. He our Minister had actually never really addressed the issues directly to TAC as such. He has regarded TAC executives as rebels, as destabilisers, and that sort of thing. It would appear the PM has seen an opening where he can solve this problem, and so he has decided to open it up. And this started two Sundays ago when we met at the Bishop's house and started dialogue on this issue. Our being here today, as I said earlier, is just a continuation of those talks.

Ebssiy: As the struggle raged, we suddenly saw a force which had hitherto been seen only when it came to contributing money and developing schools. These are the parents

and teachers associations (PTA), when they joined in and mounted pressure on behalf of their children and to the utter dismay of the Minister of National Education, have stood behind TAC. We talked to one of the parents, Professor Asonganyi, who first appreciated the long awaited text.

Asonganyi: Well our reaction, my reaction is that since the board includes all the examinations that we have wanted to be included in the text, we accept the text for now as such, as has been signed. If we will have some improvements on it, which we think we will need, that would come eventually, when the board is installed and it starts functioning. We wanted a certain degree of independence for the board. The board has been bugged down with so many representatives from all over, the ministry of finance, presidency, PM's office, Ministry of Education and so on. We will like to see how those people function in the board, and then we know what to do in order to improve the functioning of the board.

Wain: Now that the text has been signed, what in your opinion should be the follow-up now?

Asong: The follow up is that we request the government to appoint the members of the board, install them in Buea and then transfer the scripts that have been brought here and are being messed up with back to Bamenda and Buea for them to be properly marked as they have always been marked.

Wain: Now the fear is that when the scripts were moved from Bamenda and Buea to Yaoundé, some of them might have been tampered with, and you know this is an examination. Don't you have the same fear that while moving them back to these centres they may tamper with them the more?

Asong: I think there was some destruction because they tried to

move them in abnormal circumstances - at night with people who are not qualified to treat examination papers. If we have to move them back to Bamenda, we think it would be in normal circumstances where examiners will be the ones to pack the scripts and transport them back there. We don't expect that there will be any destruction if they are being transported as examination scripts. I think the soldiers and the people who were asked to transport the scripts from Buea and Bamenda did not understand what they were doing. They were carrying out a military exercise and they didn't take enough care to protect the scripts.

Wain: Now your criticism about the text is that so many people have to come from other ministries. Don't you see anything good as concerns exams under the board?

Asong: We have been asking for a board because we think that we should have research components, we should have people who understand what the Anglophone educational system is all about. All this has been incorporated into the board. I think it is a very positive move for the Anglophone education system. In fact, if we don't produce our best now, it will not be because the ministry was messing up with it. I am very sure that with the establishment of the board to manage the Anglophone system of education, it will produce the best that the Anglophone system of education can produce.

Ebssiy: This is like some achievement in conflict resolution. I don't know whether from your observation there is anything to learn.

Asong: If there is something to learn, it is mainly for government I think. That there is no use waiting for citizens to be maimed, to be soaked with water, to loose their eyes, to be knocked by policemen and gendarmes in order for government to listen to what the citizens are saying. We have continuously said that the Minister, the president, whoever is up to take care of anything in this country is

the servant of the people; and they should listen to what the people want. The Anglophone community has been boiling for some three months now and the government has appeared not to want to solve the problems that the Anglophones wanted solved. So if there is anything I want to say now, it is that government should listen to the people and act at the right moment to prevent the citizens from suffering too much before they are satisfied.

Ebssiy: The strongman we found in town was certainly Mr. Andrew Asong Wara, who is not only the national president of TAC, but a member of the Sondengam Committee. We discovered that effectively Mr. Azong Wara is happy when he finds that the right thing has been done. Contrary to what his detractors believe.

Azong: I think that in respect of the decree that has now come out, as a member of the committee I am quite satisfied that all the recommendations we made have been taken care of in this new decree. The one that came out a little earlier was definitely not acceptable. I do not know how it happened that the important aspects were left out. But the later text which was read over radio is the acceptable text that the committee came out with.

Wain: In the final text, the First School Leaving and the Teachers Examinations were not included, what explanations?

Azong: Well, at the level of the committee, there was a time when certain concessions had to be made. We had to give in on a number of issues and accept others. The first school leaving examinations which are already being conducted strictly by the Anglophone Provinces of north west and south west, so they still have some problems of running and management, but I think those problems can be handled when the board exercises an overseeing power on them. The teachers examinations are really public service examinations, and we thought that it was necessary to work out the modalities for their takeover with the public service before we actually

engage them, since we do not want our own Anglophone brothers who pursue that system of education to be job seekers in the market while the Francophones brothers automatically get their jobs after completion of the course.

Wain: But they will not recruit Francophones to teach in Anglophone schools.

Azong: No, certainly not, but you see if you allow that examination to become a general examination, what is going to happen is that they will allow as many people as possible to get into the school and then when they come out they will now begin to apply for jobs and in that case you will have the usual practices that come with seeking jobs of that nature. So we do not want our Anglophone brothers and sisters to be left out on the streets as job seekers when their Francophone brothers and sisters automatically get into jobs.

Wain: In your explanation you were talking about technical GCE, are you now saying that there will be some educational reforms?

Azong: Yes, the text itself spells that out. We expect that an officer in charge of technical, commercial and business education for ordinary level and one in charge of these examinations at the advanced level be able to come out within a year with proper syllabuses for these examinations, so that in a year or two the technical GCE will now come into place. With such things we actually need to inform the schools that this is the syllabus that you are going to examine before you come to examine them.

Ebssiy: We can't forget that you are also president of TAC. TAC has given people quite a lot of home work and the signing of this text of application, there is the feeling that at least TAC has achieved something, what lessons do you draw from the experience that has had over the last

several months in the struggle to obtain a GCE board?

Azong: Well, there have been very many lessons, some of them very tortuous indeed. I think the important lesson is that if you keep together, in any association you keep united and you define your goals, what you are going for, and you stay together, you make your goals clear, you separate them from other influences, you will certainly be able to succeed. I think that is the most important lesson that comes out of the whole struggle.

Ebssiy: That was Mr. Azong Wara and it couldn't be otherwise. As one senior citizen reminded yesterday, nothing comes out of nothing, because nobody can create any new matter. In other words for any new thing to come up the old one must be sacrificed, and to get what you want, you must lose what you have. And with that we end the programme in which you heard Mr. Augustine Ngong Kiteh, Mr. Sammy Arrey Mbi, Professor Asonganyi, Mr. Andrew Azong Wara and you got them thanks to the able Assistance of Paul Wain Ngam.

The day following publication of the text of application, TAC executive met with the PM. Charles Kiven (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20 - 27, 1993 p.18), reports what transpired:

Members of the National Exco of TAC with its President, Mr. Andrew Azong Wara at the head, met the Prime Minister Mr. Achidi Achu, Saturday October 16 1993, barely 24 hours after the text of application elaborating the structure of the GCE Examination board was published. In a meeting of Confederation of PTA's Yaoundé branch same day, Mr. Azong Wara including Messrs Sammy Arrey Mbi, Foje and Mrs. Beatrice Wamey (all TAC national executive members) amongst others, briefed Yaoundé Parents on their meeting with the PM. Mr. Azong Wara said the text which the Prime Minister signed was a little more elaborate than the one they had submitted. He said the swift signature of the text was as a result of the decision by the Yaoundé branch of the Confederation of PTA's to demonstrate in front of the Ministry of National Education

October 12 1993 to protest against government's feet dragging as to the resolution of the GCE saga. He told the heavily attended meeting that October 12, 1993 should go down in the history books as a day of victory for Anglophones in Cameroon. After a summary of the events of October 12 in Bamenda, he lauded the efforts of the parents and teachers in Yaoundé for initiating the move.

Mr. Azong Wara then recounted their meeting with the PM which he said was very fruitful. He pointed out that the decree creating the GCE Board and the publication of the text of application were solid achievements but were still on paper. TAC has also accepted concessions to the government notably the fact that the teachers Training Examination has been left in the hands of the Public Service because the teachers are basically employed by government to put technical education under the GCE Board is also a major achievement. TAC also intimated that the Board could design a GCE Examination for Technical Education as has been the case with Britain recently. Mr. Azong Wara assured that TAC will make sure the GCE Board is autonomous since it will run its finances through bank accounts all over the country into which all examination fees will be paid.

The TAC President said they told the PM that the key members of the Board have to be appointed and installed together with the Board in Buea. He disclosed that the PM claimed that but for the absence of the Head of State, (Mr. Biya is attending the Francophonie Summit in Mauritius) the Board members would have been appointed and installed already.

The PM, Mr. Wara said, however promised that immediately the President returns home, the key members of the Board will be appointed and installed. Mr. Wara added that the PM had accepted to meet up with all TAC requests and pleaded with them to mark the GCE scripts in Yaoundé for the last time. Mr. Azong Wara indicated that they will have to discuss this issue with other members of TAC before the question of marking the scripts can be resolved. He emphasized that TAC's major preoccupation now was to see the members of the Board appointed and installed in Buea.

He, however, warned those nursing ambitions to be appointed to the board in whatever capacity, to beware as TAC had made it clear that the Board members will be proposed by

her and the PTAs, 'with government coming in only to confirm.

With regards to allegedly missing scripts and those purported to have already been marked, Mr. Wara said the missing scripts were not a serious problem as the GCE examination has in-built mechanisms to over come such situations. Mr. John Fodje Taiti, on his part, said that the marking of scripts by any person before now does not matter since the trained markers will have to start from scratch. He however said that those traitors who have been marking will be taken care of by TAC.

The parents and teachers then asked whether schools were going to resume as decreed by the Minister of National Education. To this Mr. Wara said that schools cannot resume because the bulk of the teachers will be involved in the marking exercise when it eventually starts. Mr. John Fodje Taiti added that amongst the markers are principals, senior discipline masters and classroom teachers. He pointed out that there is no way schools can function if over 2500 teachers go out to mark the GCE. Mr. Azong Wara then went on to prevail on parents not to relent their support for TAC, so that the road conquered this far is not lost.

In response to TAC's briefing on their meeting with the PM, the executive members of the CAPTAC in Yaoundé thanked Mr. Azong Wara for the resolute fight he and his association has put up for the sake of the Anglophone educational system. They resolved that they will support TAC in all its battles to achieve total success.

This pledge by CAPTAC, Yaoundé Branch, to support TAC in all its battles to achieve total success, was followed two days later by a letter to the PM:

18th October, 1993.

The Honourable Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office, Yaoundé

Your Excellency,

We received with great relief your order No. 112/CAB/PM/ pf the 12/10/93 defining and determining the administrative and financial organization of the General Certificate of Education Board. The document is broadly acceptable to us, notwithstanding the following reservations on our part.

The stranglehold on the Board given to the Minister in charge of National Education can be used by a malicious Minister to paralyse it. We note that is not necessary for the Minister to “approve” “endorse” and/or “render executable” so many activities of the Board. In addition, we think the Chairperson of the Board ought automatically be the vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea or his Assistant. The date of “coming into force of this order” has not been specified anywhere in the text. We take it to be the date of signature of the order, i.e. the 12/10/93.

Furthermore, it is unfortunate that Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, the Minister whose job it is to educate our children i.e. the *Employee* of the parents, recklessly ordered police to brutalise peaceful, respectable parents who had come on the 12th of October, 1993, in strict conformity with the norms of democracy, to hand him a petition. It would help restore cordiality between him and us, if he openly apologises for the barbaric act and personally settle the medical bills incurred in the treatment and hospitalisation of injured parents during the police action.

In the course of our just struggle, we did identify a few traitors to our cause. These individuals, including of course, all those who have had anything to do with Mr. Mbella Mbappe’s disgusting and revolting attempt to ridicule and discredit the June 1993 GCE Examinations under the pretext of marking, should never ever have anything to do with the GCE Board.

Now that the greatest huddle, the signing of a satisfactory text of application has been cleared, we do hope speedy action will be taken to:

- a) Appoint and install in Buea the principal members of the Board;
- b) Have the GCE 1993 scripts transferred back to Buea and Bamenda for the prompt commencement of marking by those qualified to do so.

On its part, CAM, through its national chairman Ambassador Martin Epie Ekwoke, had this statement to make (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20-27, 1993 p.7):

Southern Cameroonians have witnessed a war of texts and counter texts since the struggle for the Examinations Board went public in 1992. The latest one, read on Friday October 15, is

supposedly the product of negotiations between TAC and the Prime Minister's envoy dispatched to Bamenda for the purpose. It is a good thing if the government of la République du Cameroun can finally have the modesty, the good sense and the patriotic fervour to consult us on things which touch directly on our Southern Cameroonian identity and personality. So far they have let it known that consulting with the people in good faith is an avowal of weakness, and even Southern Cameroonian members of government, who should know better, have been fighting hard to measure up to the expectations of their masters in this game of unnecessary conflict.

But we must refuse to be fooled once again! Let us speak with one voice as we have done over this Board issue. Let us send the message to the Prime Minister and his government, that a text is a text and can be applied or not! Let us, like one man, tell them that they should continue in the good spirit they have demonstrated and continue to: (1) make sure that the text they read was truly and honestly approved by TAC; (2) set up the Board in Buea, appoint and install its first group of officials so that they can begin laying the groundwork for taking over the next sessions of our examinations; (3) transfer the 1993 scripts back to Buea and Bamenda; (4) Have the scripts marked by the experts that have been trained for it and who are available for the marking.

Let us agree that when all this is done, TAC and the government can go ahead and announce the date of reopening for all the schools of the Republic. We have lost half a term! We can afford to lose the other half so that things are done properly! Let us be kind to ourselves and to our children!

We must send this message to the government of la République du Cameroun in very clear terms. We invite all Southern Cameroonian and citizens of la République du Cameroun to join in our ritual of noise-making on Wednesday, October 20 at 8.00 p.m.! Make noise at 8.00 p.m. October 20 for 20 minutes! Have your Francophone associates join you in the noise-making to decree "Rentrée Morte par solidarité Avec Les Anglophone"! Let the entire nation make noise on Wednesday, October 20, to tell the government that there will be no reopening until the Board problem and the 1993 scripts are satisfactorily treated.

Chapter Six

The Day Our Baby Board Came: Accounts of a Victory

Julius M. Wamey, who likened the installation of the first chairperson of the newly created GCE Board to the birth of a baby, described what happened in the following terms (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 November 3-10, 1993 p.9):

The day the new baby came was October 25, 1993. It came into the world at a few minutes past one p.m. on a rainy Monday afternoon in the premises of the Local Government Training Centre (CEFAM), which had been converted into a giant maternity for the occasion.

The choice of site was not as incongruous as it might first appear. The actual conception took place last April 2 and 3, by the All Anglophone Conference and in the Maternity home at Mount Mary. So birth in the master bedroom that was CEFAM was only fair.

Anyway, the baby came into the world, not with a squeal of physical shock, and outrage and indignation that signal our first contact with the world outside the womb. This baby came out with an adult air of joy in being alive, a triumphant cry of victory over all the evil mid-wives in the nation that tried to have it aborted or killed in the womb.

Never has the birth of a baby been witnessed by so many spectators as was that of the child now baptised the GCE Board. There were mostly closed relatives, in their thousands but there were a few family friends and some unwilling guests.

The ceremony was supposed to begin at 11 a.m. but it did not start until after midday. Although many people there could claim maternity and paternity to the child, and some were shamelessly doing so, it was when Andrew Azong Wara walked into the place and received a thunderous standing ovation that the real "pa" of the Board was known. The TAC President, while acknowledging the applause, looked properly bashful, like every new father should look. Then came the mother and future nurse of the Board, Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, (whom the mayor of Buea and TV news reports labelled Doctor Dioh, as if he were one of those people who think a doctorate is necessary to run anything in this country. The applause for him was only slightly less

thunderous, simply because his role in the event of the day was not as widely known as that of the TAC leader.

While we waited for the Minister and his entourage, we renewed old acquaintances, made new ones and relieved past experiences, especially the Mount Mary Experience that was the AAC. Those of us from Yaoundé had the chance of being lionised as veterans of the Water canon War of Tuesday October 12, and the place was peppered with the usual Yaoundé people: Dr. Verkijika Fanson, Chief John Agbor Tabi, Dr. Bole Butake, Dr. Paul Tan and the other members of the Yaoundé Confederation of PTAs. The press bench was full to the brim. Apart from Adamu Musa and Myself from Mbella II, there was Johnnie MacViban and Bernard Alphonse Libot of the Prime Minister's press staff as well as the whole of CRTV Buea, under the generalship of Becky Ndivé, the Station Manager. The Anglophone independent press, quite tellingly, was there in force to savour a victory which it had helped to bring about in the face of apathy from its Francophone counterpart and sometimes, open hostility from the official news media.

But there was no hostility or recrimination, neither among the pressmen and women nor the other delegates. It was a time for communion, so there was forgiveness and (almost) forgetfulness in the air about past wrongs. Indeed, there was that almost palpable common bond among Anglophones that usually exists between people who have gone through a sublime experience together, be it love or combat or just plain adversity. I can remember such a feeling in common with a crowd before the AAC and the Water canon War on October 12.

While waiting for the Minister, the excitement grew unbearably. Most people did not even believe that Mr. Mbella Mbappe was in town since he seemed to have arrived rather discretely. There was some trepidation when Zachary Nkwo humorously suggested that the Minister might come here and announce that government had decided to cancel the installation. Asonglefac Nkemleke embellished the joke but Auntie Becks was not amused. She found such a possibility completely unnerving.

When Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe finally showed up at 12 minutes past 12 p.m. in the company of Secretary of State Joseph Yunga Tegben, South West Governor, Peter Oben Ashu,

Director of Examinations, Mrs. Andela and other officials, he received a riotous round of boos and jeers. He was generally perceived as a reluctant mid-wife to the birth of a royal child. Few people booed Mr. Teghen simply, someone told me, because few people know him. They knew Mme Andela even less and largely left her alone. The teachers knew her but had decided to be on their best behaviour that day. Governor Oben Ashu was a different matter entirely. The crowd knew him well and they hissed at him like a pit-full of venomous snakes, especially the students, some of whom had been arrested and beaten up that past weekend. The depth of the man's unpopularity surprised me and paled besides all the press reports I had read about it.

Most of the ceremony was tedious, as all child labour normally is. Traditional dances, choral groups (normally very exciting at other times) boring speeches extolling government magnanimity, etc. The high point and the electricity were provided, once again, by Andrew Azong Wara, whose speech was a masterpiece of organised thinking and coherent English. The craftsmanship of the teachers' committee that put together that masterful address, and its calm and measured presentation by Azong Wara, reassures all Anglophone parents that the future of their children is safe in the hands of TAC.

Robert Mbella Mbappe's installation speech, apart from his quote from Andrew Azong Wara's "I was there" which drew laughter from the crowd, was rapidly forgettable. Surprisingly, Mr. Dioh, in his own address, pointedly omitted mentioning TAC from the list of persons and institutions he thanked for creation of the Board, which included president Paul Biya, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, all of whom TAC had had to wrestle with individually and collectively before the Board could come to be. But nobody seemed to mind. They knew where the victory belonged.

I come from a family half of which is made up of teachers. Azong Wara's assertion that the teachers of (West) Cameroon had finally attained their rightful place in society, made my eyes sting with tear. Teachers have long been unjustly derided in our society as being conservative, barely civilised and tight-fisted counters-of-meat-in-the-pot. That so many of us could support them in their conservative war to return to our old

educational values; that we all now tend to count the pieces of meat in our pots these days, and that almost all of us can afford someone a drink these days, shows how often we mistake virtues for vices.

At the AAC, we wept copious tears of frustration, fear and anger, especially when Pastor Ayuk provoked these emotions with his prayer. Last week, our tears were those of hope in the future of optimism and tempered joy at initial success, for which we can thank the emotional prayers of the Rev. Monsignor James Toba of Sasse,

The hi-jinks that later took place at Buea Mountain club, following the handshake between Mbella Mbappe and Dioh, installing the Board, were the frosting of the cake on the born-house ceremony. Although when George Fontamu talked about a born-house, Paul Tan quickly pointed out that it was a Board House.

And I was there. We were all there.

Dr. Paul Tan, The man with the commendable habit of always being around at important occasions, prepared the following vivid account (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 November 3-10, 1993 p.10) for those who were not there:

Once again, at the slopes of Mount Fako, Southern Cameroonians of all walks of life gathered, not to map out a marshal plan for their future battles as was the case with the AAC back in April, but this time to celebrate what many were referring to as the first son of the AAC - the GCE board. The event was the installation of its first Chairman. Everyone was there except of course those of you who have developed the habit of not turning up at every important occasion.

By 10 a.m., the Local Government training Centre was jammed to capacity, with part of the very youthful and agile public spilling over unto the cemented roof tops. Mr. Azong Wara, TAC president arrived amidst cheers, handclapping and drumming. Minister Robert Mbella Mbappe who was scheduled to arrive at 11 a.m. showed up 70 minutes late at 12.10 p.m. in typical East Cameroonian style. He was immediately welcomed with a lot of shouting, cat calls and whistling, and booed unto his seat. At his side was the son of the soil, his toughness, the all powerful military governor of the South West.

The anthem was sung in two confused parts; those in the

grand stand sang ahead while the rest of the crowd sang a sentence behind as if to indicate the unmistakable presence of representatives from two different states.

One beautiful lady (whose names, I regrettably didn't get) had composed a song in honour of Azong, Dioh, the students, parents and all, a song which she sang with a voice to match. A serious prayer was addressed to God by Monsignor James Toba. Two choirs and a dance group added a distinguished touch to the occasion.

After a welcome speech by the Mayor, Mr. Azong Wara rose to a thunderous applause to deliver the speech of the day. In his characteristic no-nonsense style, his speech left out no one who deserved praise and encouragement. Describing the Board chairman's installation as "the beginning of the restoration of the identity of a people", he reminded Mbella Mbappe that TAC was legalized by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and so remained legal.

Then, as Azong ended, item eleven was served in typical Buea style, with everyone being treated the only available free drink - water! Rain water! The mountain top which had refused to reveal itself all morning, sensing that Mbella Mbappe was about to speak, suddenly got angrier, becoming dark and gloomy. The fog descended with consuming rage. A light wind ensued, bringing a sprinkling shower of blessing with it. Then real rain followed, sending one and all scrambling for shelter. Those who might have vowed never to get close to a Francophone Minister found themselves almost rubbing shoulders with Mbella Mbappe whose only consolation at this time was the armed gendarme guard behind him. Serious thunder roared from the dark mountain as if warning Mbella to watch his words and to consider carefully what he had to say on foreign soil.

The rain and thunder meanwhile drowned the speech being delivered by a representative of the parents, Dr. Ndumbe, who gave a vivid recount of the history of the GCE. Professor Verkijke Fanzo of the University of Yaoundé I, speaking for the Yaoundé chapter of the Anglophone parents association sounded a general appeal to the PTAs, institutions and individuals, stressing that the successful functioning of the exam board depended highly on the generous contributions, financial

and otherwise, of all Anglophones, given the present shabby economic condition of the country. In response to this appeal, a basket went round.

Then Robert Mbella Mbappe rose to deliver a 6 to 7 page long flowery speech. The first blunder was that he referred to the Buea Rural Council as the Buea Urban Council. Lying through his teeth, he declared; "I feel at home in Buea". Believe this and you will believe anything you hear. Then he went on to quote from Azong's earlier speech, stating that it will go down in history that when the GCE Board was created and when the first board chairman was installed "I was there"! This was greeted with the now familiar booing that accompanied the whole of his speech.

At the end of his discourse, Mbella brought out the installation decree which he read out. Then as he shook hands with the new hoard chairman, the flashing stills cameras momentarily lit up the atmosphere.

Mr. Dioh's first pronouncement as Chairman of the GCE Board followed. There was something about that Mr. Dioh which assured me that government had made a delightful mistake in appointing him. His serene aura of determination and pious halo of uprightness was unmistakable. When he had sat there, cool, calm and collected, peering at all around him from behind his eye glasses, you could see in him a man who certainly knew where he was going and how to get there. His hair was gone, almost, and what remained of it was grey as that of any seasoned academic should be after long years of scratching and thinking. There was nothing French about his well cut dark suit.

His speech reminded me of a typical British administrative letter; short, void of useless semantic colouring, crisp and straight to the point, but pregnant with reason. Mr. Dioh expressed profound gratitude to Dr. Biya (or rather Professor Biya) for choosing him from among many other more qualified Cameroonians to foster the new baby, stating that he publicly and humbly accepted the honour. He promised to bear the burden and to sacrifice his energies, using all available resources to assure the success of his mission. His watchword was Excellence an ideal whose attainment according to him, depends on the cooperation and support of all. The Mayor of Buea Rural Council had earlier described Mr. Dioh as veritable

square peg in a square hole.

The Gala Night

The dance kicked off at exactly 10.40 p.m. with Mr. Paul Ninjoh as M.C, Mola Njoh Litumbe as chairman. TAC top brass and other dignitaries opened the floor. A second befitting record to which everyone was invited to tread a measure was “on a gagné”. The hall was jammed to capacity and as with the AAC, a shed had to be erected outside to contain the spill over.

Mola Jakai poured libation at exactly 11.45 p.m. in “country talk”. Mr. Azong Wara was handed the installation champagne which he passed unto Mr. Augustine F. Ndangam, author and veteran Anglo-Saxon Principal, with the excuse that the honour of the victory was that of the parents and not that of TAC.

When the cutting of the cake was announced, the familiar financial crisis temporarily vanished from Southern Cameroons, as people were eager to be called up to chip in, cut and taste of the cake that had been craftily fashioned in the shape of the map of Cameroon. The chairman, Mola Njoh Litumbe, cut in at 1.40 a.m. to close the dance officially. The boogie-woogie then went on T.D.B.

The Sabotage Syndrome

So far, I have given the erroneous impression that all went smoothly. Well, you could say that all went smoothly, given the determined spirit of Anglophones in the face of attempted sabotage.

As we gathered, the sous-Prefet of Victoria had refused permission for the Victoria PTA to hold a pre-installation planning meeting. Very little publicity had been made in the public media to wards the event, except for a last minute announcement carried over local Radio Buea. The Principal of GTC Buea had been contacted for his premises to be used for the gala night, but his Provincial Delegate was uncooperative. So by the time the Prime Minister’s envoy, Dr. Peter Abetty, could intervene to clear the situation, it was too late. Alternative arrangements had been made at the Buea Mountain Club. The club was small and tight for the occasion but everyone squeezed in happily. You could throw a handful of sand in the air that

night at the club and only very few grains would reach the floor. Despite this, it was simply great! The first AAC baby was born on that day. October 25 1993 and I was there. Where were you?

The Herald (No. 063, Wednesday November 3, - Nov. 10, 1993 p.1&2) had the following report by Kum Set Ewi and Aaron Agien Nyangkwe, captioned: *Azong Wara Is Man Of The Year; Mbella Mbappe Is Booed As Diah Is Installed*:

Andrew Azong Wara, president of the Teachers Association of Cameroon was the unquestionable hero at last Monday's (October 25) commissioning of the GCE Board Chairman in Buea when his arrival drew the spontaneous and wild applause of the 5000 crowd that turned up for the historic event.

Cheering went on for more than ten minutes with repeated shrieks of pro-Anglophone and pro-TAC slogans barely audible: Hail TAC you have done us proud; "Azong Wara is man of the year", "TAC should be decorated for a job well-done", Anglophone autonomy begins here!"

So sweeping and compelling was the acclaim for Azong Wara who was accompanied by TAC's Secretary General Sammy Arrey Mbi that even pro-CPDM big men who have not shown sympathy for TAC's fight with the government over the GCE Board, joined in the applause" That was the case with Buea paramount chief Sam Endeley, Parliamentarian Ray Lyonga Ikunde, Buea Rural Council Administrator Smith Becke and a host of other CPDM officials.

The crowd was made up of hundreds of TAC members and representatives of Parents' associations from Yaoundé, Douala, the North West and South west Provinces, as well as traditional chiefs from the South west who flocked to Buea like birds of Autumn to personally witness what many saw as a major victory to Anglophones.

The ceremony which took place at the Local Government Training Centre began at 12.30 mid-day one and half hours late creating suspicions and anxiety among sceptics who began to nurse fears that after such a long and hard struggle the victory might abort at that climax moment.

Such fears were soon dispelled when an announcement on the public address system urged the crowd to clear the way along the balcony to allow the Minister of Education pass freely. The Minister's arrival at 12.15 contrasted sharply with that of Azong Wara one hour earlier. Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe was booed as he picked his way through the throng to the high table under a canopy. He was flanked by the Prime Minister's envoy and Special Adviser Dr. Peter Abetty and Buea governor Peter Oben Ashu. Mr. Sylvester Dioh the GCE Board Chairman about to be installed was already on the high table.

Ceremonies began with a singing of the National Anthem followed immediately by a prayer said by Sasse College Principal Monsignor James Toba "O God, May you pour your blessing on the newly born child (the GCE Board) so that it should usher in a veritable organisation capable of sustaining Anglophone Educational standards..."

Then began speeches: Becke Smith, Andrew Azong Wara, Sylvester Dioh and Robert Mbella Mbappe all spoke in the order. Becke said that Buea felt honoured by the historic installation of the long awaited Chairman of the GCE Board.

"Today, we are beginning the process of the restoration the identity of a people, said Azong Wara in his own speech." No one should bow his head in shame or claim victor", he advised diplomatically, "following the creation and installation of the Board". On a political note, Azong Wara called on the government to take advantage of the peaceful resolution of the GCE conflict and embark upon the process of national reconciliation in other respects. Robert Mbella Mbappe drew strong indignation when he rose to speak. Placards cropped up with inscription condemning his role in the GCE affair: "Mbella Mbappe is a racist," Mbella Mbappe, winner of the 1993 prize for racism" "Oben Ashu and Mbella Mbappe good-enough for dustbin of vandals," "Mbella Mbappe, must you be strangled to perform your duties?" "Mbella Mbappe, resign over the GCE issue."

"The installation of the GCE Board in Buea", the Minister noted, is a unique and first ever occasion to be performed by a member of government and I am privileged to be the one", Mbella Mbappe surprised his TAC audience when he further announced: "I shall personally throw my support to see that the

Board goes fully operational.” The Minister presented Mr. Dioh and expressed the hope that as an experienced educationist he would be equal to the task.

Accepting his new appointment, Mr. Dioh called on all present to support and nurture the Board to grow. “I am committed to excellence,” noted Dioh.

The ceremony also attracted traditional dance groups, notably the Oroko group of Buea from Ndian Division, choral groups, notably the Likoko Membea Eyolle choir which arrived as early as 8.00 a.m. that day.

This is how “*Cameroon Calling*” of Sunday 31 October 1993 following the installation of first GCE Board chairperson, Mr. Sylvester Ngoe Dioh, presented the historic moment:

Ebssiy: After simply becoming ridiculous for fighting a cause they alone understood, the Anglophones came to a tedious journey’s end for what some consider act one of the long play. The fight for a GCE board had virtually produced a strange class of people, who denied their culture as Peter denied Jesus in the Bible. However, as living witnesses stormed Buea last Monday, it had become clear that if you hate somebody’s guts, give them a political tag (tac) and blow them up. TAC president, Andrew Azong Wara maintained Anglo-Saxon courtesy, as he welcomed the board:

“The occasion is the beginning of the process of the restoration of the identity of a people. [applause] Through the installation of the GCE board we are proud to be able to tell our children tomorrow that we were there. [applause] We wish to address this august assembly in the words of his Lordship the Bishop of Buea: We thank the almighty God for giving us the courage and strength to carry this cross through. We thank his Excellency President Paul Biya for his timely response to our appeal for intervention, [applause] and for putting in place the instrument that has enabled the resolution of the long drawn out problem. We also express our thanks to his Excellency’s government for the speedy action taken to appoint and install the chairman of the board today. We

urge government to equally speed up action to make available the necessary logistics for the board to function. We thank all the children who wrote end of course examinations this year, for sacrificing their own future in a cause to guarantee that of junior ones and the yet to be born. [applause] To these children we say, if you make it through the exams which we are going to mark in a few days, [applause] you should stand tall and proud that in the sea of trouble that surrounded the conduct of those examinations, you were able to take the right tide. If you do not finally make it, take courage and feel satisfied that you will be offered another opportunity to write a better examination. [applause] We thank the confederation of parent teacher associations of the North West and South West Provinces and of Yaoundé, Douala and Bafoussam for their numerous interventions. We thank the various religious organisations in Cameroon, whose contributions and prayers have been very significant in this struggle. Finally, we thank all individuals, journalists, political associations, pressure groups, traditional authorities, and the international community for their contributions towards the peaceful resolution of the problem. To all of the above groups and personalities, we say in the words of the great William Shakespeare, "All is well that ends well." [applause] We now have a proper instrument for measuring end-of-course achievement, that is, the GCE board, whose role has been adequately defined. It is important to emphasize here that no single individual or groups of persons, can claim victory for the achievement, nor can anyone bow his head in shame and say to himself, I have been defeated. [applause and boos] It has been a collective effort by all Cameroonians against the evil hand that has been manipulating one of our several cultural values, and heading it for the rocks. All we will wish to do on this occasion of the installation of the chairman of the board is to repeat our appeal to government to take advantage of the peaceful resolution of this problem to launch a peace initiative to reconcile the nation and engender a healthy atmosphere in all other domains of national interest.

[*applause*] Similarly, we invite all Cameroonians to join hands to construct a better nation, so that we can leave behind us footprints in the sands of progress.

Ebssiy: After looking in vain for evidence that the GCE problem was political, National Education Minister Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe did just what is ascribed to intelligent people: if you cannot change him, accept him:

Mbella Mbappe: I feel myself at home in Buea. [*applause /boos*] For those who know me as the Minister of National Education, I will remind them that my name is Mbella Mbappe Robert. [*applause/boos*] Let us go on the reason of my being here today. It is for me, ladies and gentlemen, a singular pleasure to be amongst you today, the 25th of October, 1993 in the year of our Lord to preside over this august occasion marking the installation of the chairperson of the Cameroon GCE Examination Board. This installation ceremony is not only unique in its various facets, but also the first ever conducted within the confines of the Ministry of National Education [*applause*] I therefore count myself deeply honoured and privileged to preside over such a historic ceremony. As Mr. Azong Wara said before, I can say today: When the board was created, I was there [*applause*] when the first chairperson had decided to be installed, I did it here. [*applause*]

Ebssiy: As it is said, culture is the only thing you are left with when you have lost everything. That is how those who did not see the GCE problem as cultural were surprised that people could simply go to the streets because they want excellence in education instead of money. Until effective marking begins under the vigilant eyes of those who are custodians of the GCE standards, the saga keeps unfolding.

Paul Wain Ngam: Ever since TAC demanded a text of application of the decree creating the GCE board, the appointment and subsequent installation of the board

chairperson in Buea before the marking of the 1993 GCE scripts could start, several meetings have been held in the conference hall of the Ministry of National Education. But most of the meetings with Minister Mbella Mbappe took the form of a monologue characterised by threats and the dishing out of instructions. The Honourable Minister of National education on two occasions even set a date for the marking exercise, and in a communique threatened to sanction teachers who did not respect the deadline for the marking exercise. But TAC under the leadership of persons like Azong Wara, Arrey Mbi, Forje and the others stood its ground. To them, technicians in the domain of education, the GCE had been dragged in mud for too long.

Perhaps the only meeting where the teachers appeared set for business with the authorities of the Ministry of National Education was held last Friday. Of course it came after the installation of Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, the pioneer GCE chairperson in Buea. The teachers who had promised to mark anywhere two days after the installation of the board chairperson, kept to their word. They turned up last Wednesday at the marking centres but had difficulties entering the rooms. The charlatans who had been messing up the scripts for FCFA25,000 a week have sworn to continue. The *raison d'être* of last Friday's meeting therefore, was to seek solutions to such serious problems. Especially in light of the report that some competent markers had only stopped short of exchanging blows with the clandestine markers in the O/L biology room.

The meeting was chaired by the Secretary of State for National Education, Yungha Teghen Joseph. The most important message for the GCE officials was that they play their traditional role. Such a message can only be interpreted to mean that examiners appointed just at the centres from the caretaker group will have to shut their mouths if finally retained to mark. That only those appointed by Minister Mbella Mbappe on August 3 1993 will be in charge. When Mr. Yungha. Teghen said that all markers were to be given name tags, the GCE officials

suggested that money for such badges be used to cater for the markers. But the Secretary of state insisted, and from such insistence, it can be deduced that the contract has already been awarded somebody who must fill his pockets.

Probably trying to defend those who had decided to bring in unqualified and untrained persons to mark, Mr. Yungha Teghen said that although not a professional teacher he did not think that a person has to be taught how to mark examinations in a school. Certainly the sec. of state left the hall having learnt that moderators, chief examiners and their deputies are trained, when the moderator for A/L chemistry disclosed that he had not succeeded to discuss the questions with the clandestine markers, that all of them could not say from which topics the questions had been set. The GCE officials went further to reveal that the clandestine markers had not received any procedural training, that degree holders in law and English were marking food and nutrition, with the argument that they studied it at the O/L. The examiners were unanimous that the already marked scripts be remarked and the clandestine markers paid and told to leave, since they were out for cash.

After the meeting with the Secretary of State, the examiners in the afternoon joint the rest of the markers for the launching of the marking exercise at Government High School Essos. After prayers and the singing of the National Anthem, the president of TAC Azong Wara welcomed the markers and said that the exams were going to be marked following the international norms. Chief examiners were at the marking centres yesterday to assess the damage caused by the charlatans. They are supposed to report back to TAC this morning, and it is only then that a decision shall be taken on the remarking of all the scripts. Meanwhile the studying of marking schemes starts tomorrow, to be followed by trial marking and then the real marking.

The untiring TAC officials were on hand Friday evening to enlighten the Confederation of Anglophone Parents Cameroon (CAPTAC) Yaoundé branch, on a number of

issues as concerns the reopening of schools for 1993/94 academic year. A definite decision will be taken after the marking exercise must have been assessed and confirmed to be progressing satisfactorily. The parents also learnt that the Univ. of London had written threatening not to vet the 1993 GCE if it is not marked under international norms.

Ebssiy: The credit which PM Achidi Achu has finally got from the handling of the GCE crisis is evidence that people do not hate any specific government. What people hate is having an uncaring government. We hope that the crisis has helped us understand ourselves better.

On its part, *Cameroon Post* (No. 0188 November 3-10, 1993 p.7) gave the following account of the occasion:

"Victory Day For TAC: GCE Board Chairman Commissioned - Marking Takes Off" (by Nyenty Egbeachang and Formunkwai G. Gideon.)

The bright weather suddenly gave way to a rapidly gathering nimbus cloud as the hours ticked approaching mid-day to an eventual stormy rainfall but the phenomenon did not scare away the over 4,000 crowd that converged at the Local Government Training Centre (CEFAM) Buea October 25 to witness the birth of the GCE Board through the installation of its first Chairman in the person of Mr. Sylvester Ngoe Dioh.

This historic event which demonstrated Anglophones can always achieve what they desire whenever they seriously press for it was not only a joyous day for Anglophones parents and their children but also a day of victory for the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) who fought relentlessly, shipping through all administrative gags aimed at killing their ambition to ensure that the GCE Board which was conceived at Mount Mary in Buea during the last All Anglophone Conference (AAC) April 2-3 becomes a reality.

The crowd gave a standing ovation to the National President of TAC, Mr. Andrew Azong Wara and his Secretary General Mr. Sammy Arrey Mbi, arrived commending them for their struggle while the Minister was given the boos when he arrived.

Minister Mbella Mbappe began the commissioning of the Board Chairman by introducing himself to those he claimed did not know him and went on to tell how exactly he wanted to be remembered. "When the GCE Board was being created, I was there and when the first Board Chairman was being installed, I Mbella Mbappe did it" He went on to say that the purpose for the creation of the Board was part of government policy to decentralise services so as to bring them nearer the people.

Speaking of Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, the Minister said that with his wide working experience both in the administration and educational system, he was sure that the Board Chairman was going to apply his professional qualities to enhance our educational system with a view to ensure excellence and that he was sure the appointment was befitting. He also called on the support of all and sundry for the smooth functioning of the Board.

Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh who is charged with responsibility of overseeing the policies of the Board was called upon by the Minister to ensure cordial relationship with his collaborators, and to match his words with action through excellence and justice.

TAC President

Mr. Andrew Azong Wara, the National President of TAC, likened the ceremony to that of the Ordination of a Priest 23 years ago at the Soppo Catholic Mission by Bishop Pius Awa where the clergy man summarises the ceremony with the words "Thank you, we were there". He went further to state that the granting of the GCE Board by government was the beginning of the restoration of the identity of the Anglophones.

The TAC president told students who wrote the last GCE that if they did not pass they were at least sure of a better examination in the future and that they chose the right course when they shared the solidarity of TAC during the struggle. He also paid homage to the Churches, media, political parties, pressure groups, parents and teachers for sustaining the trouble which led to the creation of the GCE Board.

Mr. Wara also said no one should claim victory or bow down his head in shame following the creation and installation of the Board Chairman and announced the immediate take off of

marking of the scripts two days after the installation ceremony.

To those who pretended not to know and kept branding TAC as an illegal organisation, Mr. Azong Wara said it loud and clear that the Association was duly registered in December 1991, and it remains a legal organisation. The TAC National president said TAC was a responsible organisation and as teachers they were conscious of their professional requirements and as such were ready to teach whenever they have to teach.

Copta Congratulates TAC, Children Back to School

In a joint address of the Confederation of Parents Teachers Association (COPTA) of the North West and South West Yaoundé chapter, presented by Dr. Ndumbe, the association pledged its support to the Board and paid tribute to the National Executive of TAC under the leadership of Mr. Azong Wara and congratulated Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh for his appointment. They expressed the wish that his wealth of experience will guide him to successfully steer the affairs of the Board.

In order to maintain our educational values COPTA pointed out that GCE marking can only be done by those initiated into the exercise. COPTA expressed gratitude that following the event of the day teachers have accepted to go and mark the GCE scripts in Yaoundé and appealed to markers to turn up for the evaluation while they the parents were ready to send their children back to school.

Since the Board can only function if it is well funded and taking cognisance of the economic crisis, COPTA appealed to all people of goodwill, institutions, PTA of North West and South West to generously contribute so that the Board can go operational as soon as possible. Here is the full text of the address:

Your Excellency, the Minister of National Education,
Your Excellency the Governor of the South west Province,
The Senior Divisional Officer Fako Division
The Divisional Officer for Buea sub-Division,
Your Highnesses,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the confederation of CAPTAC, we salute this important gathering in Buea today. Our delegations all over the country hail the creation of the GCE Board and the installation of its first chairperson.

The CAPTAC thanks his Excellency President Paul Biya for signing decree No. 93/172 of July 1, to create the General certificate of Education Examinations Board. We believe that this action of the head of state affirms his recognition of the uniqueness of the bi-cultural heritage of our country.

The CAPTAC salutes the Government through the Honourable Minister of National Education who has been at the centre of the arrangements to bring about this GCE Examination Board and who is at the centre of today's ceremony.

The GCE Examination originated in London in 1951 when it replaced the School certificate and High School Certificate Examinations. London administered the Examinations in this country from 1963 to 1977 not because in this part of the country we still believed in the intellectual superiority of our colonial master (as some critics put it) but because it is generally accepted, and rightly so, that when an organisation external to the school is responsible for the assessment, this adds an irrefutable objectivity and credibility to the grades obtained. This is one strong argument for the Board being created today.

Then the Examinations were taken over by Cameroon in 1977 again for justifiable reasons. The take over demonstrated our self-sufficiency in the administration of the Examinations and asserted our rights to decide policies and determine areas for reforms.

Cameroon was of course not the first to assume responsibility for the administration of a public examination with national importance. Earlier, in English speaking Africa, most public Examinations had been handled by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. Then in 1952 the West African Examinations council was established, followed by the East African Examinations council in 1967 and one for southern Africa in 1975. These various councils took over Examinations formerly administered in Britain and settled down to creating indigenous syllabuses to serve regional needs in Africa at

various educational levels. The setting up of these councils paved the way for orientating public examinations to serve national developments.

When we took over the GCE Examinations in 1978, London continued to assist in matters of printing and packaging up through 1991, but unfortunately while London was doing this work, we seemed to have rested our laurels and forget to understudy this technical aspect of the work. The result was that when in 1992 session we attempted for the first time the work of printing and packaging, the outcome was both disastrous and devastating. The unbelievable mess of that year, shook the credibility and international standing of the Cameroon GCE quite visibly. This left the entire Anglophone community wondering if the time wasn't ripe for the GCE Examinations Board to be put in place. Many felt that it should have been handled right from the start by a Board as in the UK. Thus, the dream for this board has been ours all along. Today our dream had come true.

Today the GCE Examinations Board is born, and no one who knows the full story can call it an easy delivery. The Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) and the confederation of Anglophone PTAs nation wide can testify to this difficulty. It took the delegations of the executives of CAPTAC of the North west and South west Provinces time to travel to Yaoundé on the 30th September, 1993 where they had discussions with the Honourable Minister of National Education for five hours from 7.30 to 12.30 a.m. That same day the Bishops of Buea, Bamenda and Kumbo, three humble but powerful men of God also had talks with the Government on the same issue but with no breakthrough. The following day, the Northwest and Southwest CAPTAC were with the Prime Minister from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. hoping that this baby would come through, but it did not.

Honourable Minister, Your Excellency, our baby is born and we like to visualise this baby as your own born baby. It must live and it must grow and mature. We ask your Excellency to nurse this baby with tenderness and love and to nourish it well. Thank you for doing so.

When a woman is in labour, she experiences pains and may be excusably naughty especially when the husband is not the understanding type, but when the baby is born as ours is

today, all past misunderstandings are readily forgotten. All parties concentrate on the joy of the new baby and bygones become bygones. We parents regard today's occasion as a reconciliatory one, and we wish to let bygones be bygones. We wish to join hands to see that our new baby grows strong and healthy. We pray that the government, parents and teachers will together nurture this GCE Examination Board to grow. We pledge our full support for this Board in whatever form we can give.

It is and only fair that after such a struggle we should pay tribute to the heroes of the struggle. We salute TAC for a job well done. We ascribe the success of today's occasion to the National Executive of TAC under the leadership of Mr. Andrew Azong Wara. On behalf of the CAPTAC we doff our cap to the TAC team.

There are lots of other brave men and women who gave this cause their whole hearted commitment, and here we raise up our thumbs for them. We like to single out the brave parents of Yaoundé CAPTAC for a warm tribute. To the government we stretch an olive branch today because we believe that the government, parents and Teachers must work together for the good of our children and all of us. Government exists for the good of the governed. And while we do this today, let us reflect on the wise words of Mr. E.B. White who in his own definition of democracy says, "It is the line that forms on the right. It is the don't in don't shove... (It) is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time".

Mr(s). Chairperson of the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination Board, CAPTAC extends their special and warm congratulations to you for this well deserved appointment as the first chairperson of the Cameroon GCE Examination Board. We have no doubt that the confidence of the Head of state in you is not misplaced, and that you easily draw from your wealth of experience in administering and private educational establishments in this country to pilot the affairs of this Examination Board successfully. Accept our congratulations.

Honourable Minister, Your Excellency,

Happy moments such as these may be appropriate time for sober reflection on the subject matter that is at the heart of today's ceremony. As the Honourable Minister is obviously

aware, the GCE Examinations mirror a great deal of values and long term goals in the educational system West of the Mungo River. For instance, a wide range of questions in many subjects of this Examination, is highly taxing in what students are expected to accomplish in a relatively short time. The purpose behind this is a certain kind of mind formation which trains students to organise their ideas rapidly, express their ideas lucidly, fluently and quickly. Surely these qualities are of service in real life situations and after students have left school.

If protests were made recently about unqualified persons marking the GCE, it is not because we doubted their intellectual attainment. Anyone (Francophone or Anglophone) not initiated into that extensive rigour to which graduates and experienced teachers are themselves usually subjected before they are allowed to mark, cannot mark the GCE examinations satisfactorily.

We the parents are gratified by the fact that in response to this happy event teachers have accepted to go and mark in Yaoundé. We appeal to all our competent and regular examiners to all turn up there and to fully play the respective roles assigned to their various offices so that every child's script will receive that standing judgement by which all of them should be evaluated.

In view of this, we the parents are now willing to send our children back to school as soon as the marking exercise by the qualified examiners is satisfactorily in progress.

As for the examinations Board we wish that it goes operational immediately to start planning for the 1994 session of the examinations.

Thanks for your kind attention
Long live the Cameroon GCE examination Board
Long live sound Education in Cameroon
Long live Cameroon

Signed on behalf of CAPTAC:
Professor Verkijika Fanson, CAPTAC Yaoundé Branch; R. Dia Ndumbe, CAPTAC S.W.P; A.F. Ndangam, CAPTAC N.W.P

The Board Chairman

On his part, the Board Chairman, Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, expressed profound and unreserved gratitude to the Head of State for singling him out among other many qualified candidates who expected the offer and said that he, like the usual pioneer he is, was ready for the challenges.

While stating that Education is an economic commodity that must be marketable and exchangeable, the Board chairman pledged the loyalty of the Board to its functions and also appealed for financial support from the population as the State budget cannot satisfactorily meet the requirements of the Board.

In a statement signed by its chairperson Njoh Litumbe, the Liberal Democratic Alliance (Atabe Ettanki, *Cameroon Post* No. 0189, 17-24 November, 1993 p.7) welcomed the installation of the GCE board in Buea. The party commended the occasion, saying that: "The dedication and unity of purpose of the teachers, parents and Anglophone Cameroonians in pursuit of their just cause has paid off in the end in spite of violent governmental repressive measures." To him, the massive attendance at short notice, by Anglophones from all over the country, at the ceremony at which Mr. Sylvester Dioh was installed, was "a clear signal that Anglophones are determined to assert their cultural identity as a people who, on attaining independence on 1st October, 1961, *Voluntarily* opted to join La République du Cameroun... as a STATE in a two State Federation". Mr. Litumbe denounced the senseless wave of officially sanctioned violence and the loss of lives, limbs and property that preceded the granting of the board. Such senseless repression could only have come from a government with "a dim political vision, unable to read the writing on the wall." He extended salutes to all men of courage who fought the Examination Board battle, warning that: "A more decisive one awaits them as the LDA sounds the trumpet for battle for the political Resurrection of a state which attained independence and voluntarily entered a Union, only to be annexed, marginalised and brutalised".

To Rodcod Gobata (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 November 3-10, 1993 p.5), this initial victory by TAC and the Anglophone community, are: "*The Sign of Things to Come*". He writes:

This week we can pause to celebrate the installation of the Chairman of the GCE Board, Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, at Buea

which incidentally, occurred on the same day as our conditional admission into the Commonwealth, namely, Monday 25th October, 1993. Did you listen to “Luncheon Date” that day? If you did you must have heard Auntie (or is it anti?) Becky Ndive. She excitedly anticipated the news and announced the installation with the same breathless alacrity and glee with which she has usually read the outrageously autocratic and repressive communiques of the psychopathic Governor. What Becky did was illegal, since “*Luncheon Date*” is now strictly only for announcements, but we loved it. As one of the law-makers, she should know how to bend or break the law when it becomes necessary. So, is it not quite clear after all that all of us stand to gain from a credible educational system? Will Peter Agbor Tabi’s children and Peter Oben Ashu’s children not benefit from our struggles before my own children, the oldest of whom is still only three? Our next struggle will be for a credibly autonomous English language channel of CRTV. I hope that auntie Becky Ndive and even the likes of Fai Wo Tahshitiy and Judas Lukariot (with a wink to *The Herald’s* Musings) will be with us the day we decide to march through Mballa II to Unity Palace to press home this particular demand. They will be the immediate beneficiaries of that demand.

But in spite of the installation of the Chairman of the GCE Board, and TAC’s willingness to immediately start marking the GCE, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe and his collaborators have persisted in a logic of senseless defiance and intransigence that is very surprising for an octogenarian of his standing. Is a grey moustache not at least a sign of some practical wisdom gathered from experience through the years? The answer is blowing in the wind. Mbella Mbappe’s people are refusing genuine GCE markers access into the marking centres. The Francophone adventurers he recruited before have continued damaging the GCE scripts. And his henchmen are even saying that they no longer need the real markers. That is the situation as I am writing this. Developments are being followed, minute by minute. I only hope that they are fully aware that the Anglophone community has firmly resolved to reject this year’s GCE results *in toto* and to re-register their children for a repeat of the exams *unless* the marking is completely redone by the qualified markers.

We are anxiously awaiting the return of the Professor from China. If he has really earned his professorship, oriental wisdom will surely lead him to remove, with immediate effect, on arrival, the following jiggers from our national foot: Mbella Mbappe, Peter Agbor Tabi, Joseph Owona and Ephraim Inoni. If he can for once do this and satisfy popular aspirations, I'm sure that he could soon bag another honorary qualification. The first meeting of the GCE Board could consider awarding him GCE A/L (*honoris causa*) in any two subjects of his choice.

Credible rumours reaching us hold that plans are underway to dedicate and name the University Library of Yaoundé 1 after Professor Biya instead of Professor Fonlon as demanded by popular opinion. I have once praised Biya in this column for not caring about monuments being dedicated to him (*No Trifling Matter* of April 30 - May 6, 1992). May be he has changed. My own humble suggestion was given *loc cit* well, if they go ahead and name the library after him, then let us all patiently wait for time to tell which dedication will stand the test and which will be washed away, like fresh paint, by the first rains.

Focus on Mr. Sylvester Ngoe Dioh

(*Cameroon Post* No. 0188, November 3-10, 1993 p.8)

He is better known as the Principal of the National Comprehensive High school. Insiders however, say that Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh henceforth the Chairman of the Board, may not quite be a dark horse. In fact, he's been in the fight all along. The relevant is, however, that all and sundry believe the man is good. Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh had a chat with Nyenty Egbeanchang of *Cameroon Post* shortly after his inaugural.

Cameroon Post (CP): Mr. Chairman, how did you receive the announcement of your appointment last Thursday?

Sylvester N. Dioh (SND): I was most astonished because while I was engaged in the GCE commission set up by the Prime Minister, I nursed no ambition of holding any position in the Board. I made my contribution to the committee merely as a technician, offering his services to the State, but knowing that appointments are made based on the

background, training and competence of the individual I thought it was the judgement of the Head of State to have taken those factors into consideration before perhaps considering me the best for the post.

CP: Can you clear the air on the present situation of the 1992/93 GCE scripts?

SND: The 1992/93 GCE examination is the responsibility of the Department of examinations in the Ministry of National Education and responsibilities attributed to the newly installed Board are not retrospective, therefore, the Board and its chairman have no legal responsibility over the administration and publication of the 1992/93 GCE examination results.

CP: Is the marking going to be done in Buea and Bamenda as earlier stressed by TAC?

SND: The marking of scripts was supposed to begin as soon as the Board Chairman was installed as earlier stated by the National President of TAC. Therefore, the question of transferring scripts back to Buea and Bamenda from Yaoundé does not arise. The scripts will be marked anywhere, particularly in Yaoundé.

CP: The GCE Board chairman has been appointed and installed, what of the Registrar and other members comprising the council.

SND: The text of application clearly spells out the composition of the Board, its membership and that of the council. The responsibility lies with the Board Chairman to request the various institutions concerned to appoint candidates into the Board and to this effect, TAC and educational institutions such as the Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist and the lay education authorities have been requested to appoint two candidates each as well as the PTA of the South West and North West one candidate each latest October 27 in either case so that after the reception and

composition of the Council, the Board can be able to hold its first meeting by mid next month.

CP: In our country, teachers have given the present situation which has led to the creation of the GCE Board, what comments do you reserve for TAC?

SND: If teachers of Anglophone origin have never shown any interest in the past in a particular area in the educational endeavour and growth, it may be because they were satisfied with the process. But in recent years, there has been a lot of concern and show of dissatisfaction both from parents and teachers on the inefficiency and the questionable conduct of the GCE examination. This is what provoked the interest of the teachers with a view of seeking a way to improve the situation of the GCE and indeed, the evaluation of our traditional Anglo-Saxon examinations. I also think that this led TAC to swing into prominence as it followed up closely the GCE issue and took necessary measures to make government listen to the cry of the Anglophone Cameroonian by signing the decree creating the GCE Board, its text of application and the decree appointing the Board Chairman.

CP: Are you satisfied with the present set up by Government?

SND: Human society is dynamic. The government which caters for the needs of this society is also dynamic. So government has to structure its operations and governmental institutions to suit the need of the people, if those needs turn towards a particular direction. A conservative approach by government to a particular problem does not solve the problem, instead the government has to work for the interest of those whom it represents. I also think that the present situation should not lead anybody to thinking that we have reached our goal, but that we are in constant search for those values and those strategies that will give this country a dynamic and best approach to an economically viable educational

system.

CP: A lot of scepticism surrounds the just ended ceremony since no mention was made of the seat and structures of the Board. Some people view it as another trick by government to water down the grievances of the Anglophones and no sooner will the whole thing be a forgotten affair. What have you to say?

SND: The decree creating the Board, July 1 1993, clearly states that the seat of the Board is Buea and I am also happy to announce that following a meeting I had with the Minister and the South West Governor shortly after the installation, two office blocs at IPAR Buea have already been allocated to the Board and the Governor has also invited me to join him in the search for a suitable office premises in Buea. But it should be clearly understood that the Board is not just an institution that will use only paper but will also be dealing with a lot of expensive equipment like computers, therefore it is necessary for us to look for a very secured building to house the Board.

Brief Profile of Sylvester Ngoe Dioh

(*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 November 3-10, 1993 p.9)

Sylvester N. Dioh was born on 18th September 1933 in a village called Dikome Balue in Ndian Division.

After Sylvester N. Dioh passed the competitive Government Provincial Entrance examination in Standard 4 at scholarship level in the RCM School, Ikassa-Ndian he proceeded to St. Joseph's College, Sasse, Buea. In 1950 he completed secondary education qualifying with a Cambridge Overseas School certificate.

Between 1951 and 1959, Sylvester Dioh variously did the Teachers' Grade II course at Bishop Shanahan Teachers' College, Orlu Eastern Nigeria; taught at St Joseph's College Sasse, proceeded to the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria and graduated with the GCE (Advanced Level) Certificate in History, Geography and English Literature in June 1959.

Sylvester Dioh studied at the University College, Ibadan,

then an affiliate College of University of London from 1959 -1962 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) honours degree in Geography. He later proceeded to the University of California, Berkeley in USA ending up with a Masters degree (MA) in Geography and Masters' degree in Education, specialising in Educational Administration and Curriculum Development in 1966.

Sylvester Dioh's work experience is wide and varied. During his working life, he has held several posts of responsibility. He was cumulatively principal of CCAST Bambili, Founder and Director of National school of Agriculture, Bambili, Founder and Director of Ecole Normale Superieure Annex, Bambili, from 1963 to 1970, Director of Teacher Education in the then Secretariat of State for Education in Buea, Federated state of West Cameroon in 1971. Between 1972 and 1976, he served as Chief of Administration and Technical Affairs in the Office of the Governor of the South West Province. In 1977, Mr. Dioh served as Charges d'Etudes in the Ministry of National Education, Yaoundé. That year, Mr. Dioh proceeded to Nairobi, Kenya where he worked as a Curriculum Development Expert in a post Graduate Diploma Education Course in Curriculum Development mounted jointly by the African Curriculum Organisation (ACO), German Agency for Technical Assistance (GTZ), UNESCO and University of Nairobi.

Mr. Dioh returned to Cameroon in 1986 after a successful career in Nairobi and retired from the Cameroon Civil service in 1987. Currently, he is the Principal of the National Comprehensive Secondary School in Limbe. Through his initiative, the Honourable Minister of Education has approved a Second Cycle for this School and so it should now be known as the National Comprehensive High school, Limbe.

While a student at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Sylvester Dioh became a student activist and in this capacity he became Secretary General of National Union of Kamerun students (NUKS) Africa, later president of NUCKS Africa. He was a member of NUCKS campaign term for the Plebiscite in February 1961 that eventually led to the Unification and the birth of the Federal United Republic of Cameroon now Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Dioh is happily married with 4 children.

On its part *The Herald* (No. 063 23-10 November 1993 p. 11), through its editor-in-chief Dr. Boniface Forbin, realised an interview with TAC President Andrew Azong Wara, to crown what he captioned, “the greatest achievement of Anglophones since independence”, the GCE Board. Here is what the paper published:

Andrew Azong Wara, President of the Teachers Association of Cameroon is in the News. Under his leadership TAC had successfully forced the government to create a GCE Board based in Buea, after a 4-month struggle between the teachers and the Minister of Education. While Anglophones were still savouring the victory, *The Herald* which provided close coverage of the saga as it unfolded, invited Andrew Azong Wara to its Melen office, Yaoundé where he talked with the editor Boniface Forbin about the Board, the conflict, problems and prospects.

The Herald (TH): Mr. Andrew Azong Wara, we of *The Herald* are very thankful to you and members of the TAC executive whom we congratulate for the marvellous job you have done to oblige the government to accept the urgent need for a GCE board run precisely on the lines that you understand. We consider this to be a very great victory for the Anglo-Saxon system of education in Cameroon. The victory has been achieved and it remains now to operate the board. TAC came into existence as a result of this problem. Now one might consider that the struggle is over at least for now. What becomes of TAC?

Andrew Azong Wara (AAW): We will like to thank *The Herald* newspaper in particular and the rest of the press in general for the encouragement that they have given us throughout the struggle. I think that their contribution has been very significant and has helped to put us together and define for us a sense of purpose. We have achieved only one goal of the Teachers’ Association of Cameroon which was getting an examination board. We still have other things to do. It is true that TAC was born out of the GCE problem but it was also an Association that was necessary to have been in existence long before

the GCE problem because there are educational problems to be handled and the GCE problem is just one of them. There is still a lot of work to be done on development of curricula for schools development of technical education especially in the Anglophone sector, and even operation of educational laboratories, libraries and others. These are just some of the tasks that TAC will involve itself in the foreseeable future.

TH: Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh has been appointed as chairman of the GCE board. Do you as president of TAC intend to join the board as well?

AAW: We welcome the appointment of Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh. Mr. Dioh is a very seasoned educationist and has served in various important positions. The happy thing about him is that most of the things that he has been involved in have been successful and we very much hope that his involvement in the board will lead to its effective take-off. As for TAC, we see ourselves as the mentors of the examinations board and we think that we have to get actively involved in order to ensure it's effective take-off, we think that if we leave the board now in the hands of people who are not aware of what we had intended to have in it. We will be killing something that is just beginning so we intend to be actively involved in the board.

TH: One thing was particularly remarkable during the four months of your conflict with the government; the complete silence and absence of Francophones. I happen to know that the Cameroon Baccalaureat and Licence from the University of Yaoundé are not recognised in France for further education. Why this nonchalance of Francophones in the struggle that TAC was putting up against the government?

AAW: This whole idea of institutional arrangements for handling examinations is a very strange idea to Francophones especially in this country. Francophone

countries like Togo, Benin. Ivory Coast sharing boundaries with Anglophone ones are already very aware of the need for the structures of examination such as boards, but in Cameroon, this has not been the case. Even the BACC board that Francophones now have was a recommendation of TAC. The Francophones have not even come round to appreciate what they now have.

TH: At the very beginning of TAC's struggle with the government, there was this question of unpaid arrears of marking fees which to my knowledge remains unsolved. How much is the government owing teachers and do you intend to press this question through before you start marking the 1993 GCE?

AAW: That was indeed foremost in our minds when we started this struggle. The department of examinations owes examiners something like 11 billion francs out of which Anglophone examiners have some 3.7 billion. As to whether we intend to press for that before we get to marking. We are quite appreciative of the fact that we have an economic crisis in Cameroon now and we do not intend to insist that we get paid before we begin marking. Right now, we are ready to begin the marking with very little in our pockets.

TH: Talking about money, we did understand that in the course of the last several months you were lured with money to give up your role in the struggle. Is this true and who exactly wanted to bribe you and how much money were they talking about?

AAW: I think that was mere speculation because in all our discussion, we have never been proposed money. What they tempted us with were positions. I remember that at one time the Minister of education in our discussion tried to insinuate that I had spent a lot of time in Bambili and he felt that I should grow in my professional career. My reaction made him immediately realize that he was on the wrong line.

TH: What is your personal assessment of the Minister of National Education Robert Mbella Mbappe vis-à-vis this GCE problem? Do you see him as having acted on his own initiative or having simply tried to apply the policy of the government?

AAW: The first thing is that I think the Minister of National Education has absolutely no idea of how the GCE itself is run because when you listen to some of his utterances, you get the impression that he is talking about a completely different thing and not the GCE. He has looked at it as exercising government authority on a purely technical issue and that has contributed a lot to the long drawn-out struggle that we have had to go through. He did not realize from the onset that this was purely a technical problem and that it needed technicians and not politicians to handle. He is a politician and I think that if you talk about the technical aspects of education, I find him totally wanting in. He has not been honest enough to admit that this is not his field.

TH: We realized that for your action to have succeeded as well as it did you had a lot of support from PTA's. How did you get the parents to stand so well behind TAC?

AAW: Usually in the years that have gone by whenever we came out with this problem, government always played the cheap joke of appealing to the consciences of parents in the interest of their children; Each time, parents came back to us pleading that their children would suffer and so we should yield and go and mark. Somewhere along the line we always bowed to the parents. However, this year, we decided to carry our message straight to the parents to show them what was going wrong and what we were fighting for. We compiled papers to show the harm that was being done to their children's education and we got the intelligent parents to understand the problem.

TH: Another remarkable thing we observed of your struggle was how you did not get TAC involved in making political statements even though there were insinuations from the Minister of education that you were politically motivated. Were there any political motivations in your action?

AAW: No. The whole idea was borne purely out of technical considerations. They could not at any one time tie us up with any political party. They failed entirely to turn the problem into a political one. It is only then that they began to realize what we really wanted.

TH: What would you consider as the most difficult part of the four months struggle between TAC and the Minister of education?

AAW: I think the most difficult part was selling the idea to the Prime Minister because the PM seems to have doubted our real motives. Since he is head of government, we had to get the idea through to him and this seems to have come through sometime in July. That was when he realized that the best way out of the problem was to go to the root of it and understand the people's wish. When that happened, the PM immediately, pushed through the decree after which we started seeing a forceful Prime Minister - someone ready to solve the problem. His intervention has contributed a lot to the resolution of the problem.

TH: Will you then consider that he has finished off this problem as a hero, because I do recall that at various stages his role was misunderstood and there were unfriendly letters addressed to him threatening him and warning him to do better?

AAW: He is one of these very humble and modest personalities I have met so far in this our struggle. I don't know how he will react to me making a statement about him but I think very sincerely and in all honesty that this achievement

that we have had is the greatest that Anglophones have ever had since independence. His contribution to this present achievement has been very remarkable. I would think that even if the Prime Minister were to stop at this stage, he could pass into history as one of the greatest achievers of Anglophones.

TH: When you arrived at the ceremony for the installation of Mr. Dioh, you had a long standing ovation that lasted for about 10 minutes. How did you feel about this moment of acclaim?

AAW: I felt very proud as a teacher because for once at least, teachers have raised their heads above water and everybody could see that this was a great achievement. It wasn't an ovation for Andrew Azong Wara as a person. It was an ovation for the teacher because it is the teacher that has stood his ground. I couldn't have achieved this without their entire support. We felt very elated as we saw a dream come true. We think that with more unity among the teachers, we can achieve greater heights for Anglophones.

One of those also interviewed after the installation of the first chairperson of the GCE Board, was Mr. Peter N. Chateh, President of CAPTAC Yaoundé Branch (*Cameroon Post* No. 0189 10 - 17 November 1993 p.12):

Cameroon Post (CP): We understand you are president of the Yaoundé Branch of CAPTAC

Peter N. Chateh (PNC): Yes, I am

CP: How did it come about?

PNC: When the problems started, we had to form our own branch to study the problem. First, we held a number of meetings. Secondly, we tried and got representatives

from all Yaoundé PTAs. We then carried out a real democratic election. We believe in democracy and that without democracy, we cannot have an elected bureau. We are totally democratic. At every meeting we allow every person speak. In the end we select a group to write a resolution or communique. This is read at the meeting. Every person approves whatever is written. We do not believe in the President writing for the people. We believe in him signing for the people.

CP: You have written that you will not recognise a GCE marked by Francophones.

PNC: Yes. There are two main things, Markers have to be qualified, i.e., first degree or its equivalence plus at least three (3) years of teaching. They must have been tested to mark well. Secondly, our scripts have to be marked only by qualified markers. Thirdly, all the papers Francophones are awarding marks will have to be remarked Mr. Robert Mbella Mbappe wanted to deceive parents by giving many "A". This would have neither been recognised at home nor internationally. We decided simply to tear such "certificates" and not send our children to any University. I have University qualifications in Geography but *Cannot* mark the GCE in geography until I am trained to do so.

CP: You say Francophones are marking.

PNC: Yes. Real Francophones are *Given* money to 'award mark' not mark. They are doing like their watered down BACC. I understand some are awarding 80per cent. What this means is not known to us. All A/L examinations are in several parts. I did Geography at A/L and one of the important parts was and remains cartography. When I entered this University, we were dragged back wards because Francophones had never done cartography. If you take science subjects like Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, they all almost all are in 4 sections. In biology, you must pass in the practical work to succeed.

You can obtain let's say full marks in the first three. If you do not pass in the practical, you will not pass. In BAC, they give you 1 or 2 questions to answer and that is all. There is no practical. We cannot accept results where unqualified people have awarded marks. The BAC was an examination in those days.

CP: What has happened with real markers of the GCE?

PNC: They have come but are not admitted in the ENS. People are receiving FCFA 500 for badges. A shame. Also, they refuse to have them remarked. We are really democratic and the resolution will be taken by the CAPTAC. We will study the possibility of sending children to schools on the 15th of November, 1993. All those who did the O/L and A/L may go and repeat. The fact is that they will have to repeat the GCE if it is not marked by correct markers, we will not accept it. I understand a heavy Francophone says they have broken the myth of the GCE. They have broken nothing. Instead of idiots studying the system they want to destroy it. They will *not* succeed. The so-called Minister of National Education has not even studied what is happening. Instead, he bullies people. He mistakes the Ministry for his private home.

CP: You have mentioned the Minister. Do you respect him?

PNC: I respect the post not the person. The holder ought to have resigned by now. You cannot have somebody who does not study but wants to destroy a system. I know the regime in place will leave him there as long as he likes. I understand he has brought his brothers from Nkongsamba to award marks. If you are a Minister and do not know the educational and examination system, you ought to resign. But since the aim is to distribute money to them, he will be there. I understand there are also many people from another Anglophone tribe.

CP: Do you think students will pay the same amount of FCFA 3,500 for the examination?

PNC: The amount we paid before when we did the London GCE was far higher than this. It was brought down when the GCE was cameroonised. In reality, parents who send their children to good boarding schools spend at least FCFA 1,200,000 for their children for 5 years. For the Francophone examination, there is usually only one question. In fact, they do not assess the children will. Some pass who do not merit and some fail who ought to pass. I remember a person followed my brother-in-law in Bafia who was correcting BAC to ask him make his child pass. At that time the road was not tarred. The aim of Francophone parents and children is to pass the examination and not to learn and know. The GCE board will come out with an amount. I think they can come out with a sum which will be much higher than FCFA 3,500 as things will be better structured. If we want a good assessment of our children, we must pay for it. The board will not only mark examinations, it will study the system well and come out with proposals.

CP: What do you think about the text creating the Board?

PNC: The text CAB/PM of 12th October, 1993 is acceptable. We have already made our criticisms and sent. We feel things should be better than they are. But for now we can start working with it.

CP: We learnt that you people demonstrated on 12th October, 1993.

PNC: It is really a pity. We are dealing with people who do not know peace. Parents, well behaved and dressed went to give a protest letter to the Minister of National Education. He sent troops that inflicted wounds on people. When we met that day, we counted 6. The number has now gone up to more than 8. One person really lost the right eye because of the water. We shall see what will happen. I and others are thinking of something but until we come to a conclusion, I cannot give you

anything. Is this what we call democracy? See human rights violations!

CP: To end up. What will you say about the board and its success?

PNC: The Board will succeed. It is us that will make it succeed. We have to spend some money for it to succeed. We have started by putting the right Chairperson. All that is left is the other members of the Board, housing, equipment and we continue to help financially.

CP: Your last word.

PNC: It will be to the children I want to say this. My children, we have struggled for you. All that you can do for us is to study well. You should study and prove that we have left a system for you. It is not the Francophone theoretical system with no practical content. Be practical, children. May God bless you.

In an article titled "GCE Board only Beginning of Hard, Long Struggle" (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 3-10 November 1993 p.15), Ndziwana Mbake claims that:

The Francophones have a strategy the aim of which is to isolate, victimise, create hatred and conflict among Anglophones, and while you are fighting each other you forget your common enemy who now has the time to pick up the pieces and sit back to enjoy the fruits of your own labour. Divide and rule, they say it is.

No doubt therefore that on October 12 when some 100 Anglophone parents demonstrated in front of the Ministry of National Education and were water soaked and tear gassed, Makon Ma Pondi wrote in the next days *Cameroon Tribune* that it was only a handful of Anglophone students who wanted their GCE scripts to be marked. Of course, you all know who was there.

I remember at the height of the 1991 ghost towns operation, this very Makon Ma Pondi told me; "que veut ce monsieur qui s'appelle John Fru Ndi? Il croit qu'il peut

gouverner ce pays un jour? Jamais, un Anglophone ne pourra jamais être président au Cameroun. Il rêve un rêve qui ne pourra jamais se réaliser”.

(English translation: “What does this man called John Fru Ndi want? Never, an Anglophone can never be president in Cameroon. He is dreaming a dream that will never come true).

The statement was made following a heated discussion on who was actually responsible for the disastrous consequences of the ghost towns operation. The opposition headed by Fru Ndi who called for it of the inept Biya regime which would not give in to democracy demands.

But Makon Ma Pondi’s statement was pregnant with meaning “Never, an Anglophone can never be president in Cameroon. In other words, how can a sub-human dream of ruling human beings. Very similar to Emah Basile’s “enemies dans la maison” and “ceux qui sont pas content n’ont qu’à aller ailleurs” of Mbombo Njoya, then Minister of Territorial Administration.

Makon Ma Pondi’s statement also came at a time when some senior French citizens were making the rounds of their “Cameroonian plantation” and urging John Fru Ndi to give off the fight for plural democracy in Cameroon. After they failed to woo him over, they turned to similar French methods when confronted with a formidable force: blackmail, threats intimidation, etc.

During one of those tours one of them (Jacques Foccart, if my memory has not failed me) had the guts to say aloud that they (the French) will never sit back to watch the Anglophones rule in Cameroon. He went on to say that whatever the efforts of the SDF, which he identified as an Anglophone party, will never have more than 35 seats in parliament, meaning the Anglophone will permanently be in the minority and can therefore never accede to power.

The above is just to show how much the Cameroonian FROG and their French mentors hate the Anglophone. They only come near you when they want to exploit you. That is why they put everything to rob John Fru Ndi of the 1992 presidential election. His crime was, and is that he is Anglophone. This morbid hatred for the Anglophone in Cameroon falls in line with the Port-Louis Declaration.

The experiment had been on in Cameroon for a long time, in fact since reunification. Ahidjo had put in place a long-term strategy to marginalise, subjugate and assimilate the Anglophone. Biya continued in that path very faithfully. The foot-dragging over the Examination is the logical extension of that strategy. Or how do you explain that even while Mbella Mbappe was in Buea installing the chairperson of the GCE Board at the same time his subordinates were recruiting former ENS students in Yaoundé on his instructions to mark the GCE.

Never trust a FROG. The FROG is only full of bad faith. A good FROG is only one who is dead and buried. The Board is only the beginning of a long and hard battle to restore our Anglophone culture. The struggle continues.

Even before the chairperson of the board was installed, in deed shortly after his appointment became public knowledge, speculation was already on who will be board registrar. This attracted comment in the press from persons who wanted no mistake made in this connection. Among these was Rodcod Gobata, who in *Cameroon Post* (No. 0188 November 3 – 10, 1993 p.5), made this observation: Of course it is not only Biya loves honorifics he does not deserve. What I witnessed in Buea last week reminded me powerfully about this phenomenon in our society. The fight for the registrarship of the GCE Board is on and is fierce. There were certain gentlemen (and even some ladies) who were prowling the packed installation parties at the Mountain Club and other locations campaigning shamelessly for the post. Some who were previously known as fierce opponents of the TAC campaign, which they said was political, became not only last-minute converts but tried to convince anyone who would listen that theirs was a fifth-column strategy, that they were working in the background and that it was purely thanks to them that the battle had been won. Others whom no one had ever seen at a PTA meeting before turned up in Buea claiming to belong to PTA delegations. All of them had the common characteristic of a glad handing everyone like American politicians on the eve of an election.

But the government should be damn careful about this Registrar business. If the choice does not suit TAC or the COPTA, then the fun might just start all over again.

In a second article (*Cameroon Post* No. 0186 October 20 -

27, 1993 p.5), Rodcod Gobata invites all adventurers to allow TAC the freedom to savour their victory:

On the front page of this newspaper is a picture of Andrew Azong Wara, president of the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC). It wasn't for lack of a better symbol that we put Mr. Azong Wara's picture where it is, for virtually everyone knows that he richly deserves it; he and his colleagues have worked tirelessly, staking their jobs, careers and even their lives, in a struggle to obtain quality education for all our children. By careful targeting and avoiding to mix issues, they succeeded in gaining sympathy across the political spectrum and enlisting the help of a diversified Anglophone community. This way they have scored our first real victory in our struggle to extricate ourselves from the grip of French and the Francophone minions.

What is clear is that TAC, with the belated but determined support of the parents, has succeeded where all other opponents of the government have failed. They have sown complete confusion within the ranks of the ruling class and have been issued with the first official document attending to government capitulation in the whole blighted history of the benighted country.

We should let TAC savour their victory in this first of the many other Anglophone battles ahead. They worked hard for it and they deserve it.

It is like the first tiny hole in the large retaining wall of a great dam. It grows by the minute and more water pours out.

Teachers, who led us as children, have now come to lead us as adults. Ironically it was a band of teachers (Foncha, Muna etc) who brought us here. A more intrepid band is leading us back.

Shortly after the installation, CAPTAC issued this press release:

In view of the installation of the chairperson of the Council of the GCE Examination Board today 25th October 1993 by the Honourable Minister of National Education, and the acceptance of the teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC) to start the marking of the June 1993 GCE scripts as from Wednesday 27th October 1993, and the need to give the teachers adequate time to be effectively back in their schools, the Confederation of Anglophone Parent-teacher Association of

Cameroon (CAPTAC) meeting in Buea this 25th Day 1993, hereby calls on all parents to send their children to school on Monday 15th November 1993.

Signed for and on behalf of CAPTAC by:

Dr. R. Dia Ndumbe, A.F. Ndangam, Professor V. Fanso, Kuve C. Jackkai, Nama Ewanga

Chapter Seven

Effective Marking of the GCE: No Easy Task

Although TAC had promised to begin marking the GCE two days following the installation of the board chairperson, marking only started in effect a week later.

As Joseph K. Bannavti reports (*Cameroon Post* No. 0188 3-20 November 1993 page 21), TAC did not find it easy substituting the 'pirate markers' with qualified ones. He writes:

A curious drama is unfolding at the various marking centres in Yaoundé (Essos, ENS) with the main protagonists being some even more curious GCE markers recruited by Robert Mbella Mbappe and Chancellor Peter Agbor Tabi and the 2500 regular GCE markers delegated by TAC.

TAC markers who turned up in Yaoundé last week to correct the GCE were not only barred entry into the various centres by gendarmes operating on instructions from Mbella Mbappe, but they found to their dismay that GCE scripts have been mutilated beyond recognition by those who have been marking clandestinely.

According to one marker, Mr. Njikang, strange things are happening with some papers. "We saw marks like 94per cent and 95per cent in History C, a thing that has not happened since 1982. "The highest mark in History C this far, has been 77."

Other markers elaborate that Mbella Mbappe's markers have no notion of what the GCE is all about.

Another marker: "The standard procedure is to let a student who misreads instructions and answers 6 questions instead of 5 get off with murder. Examiners mark all six answers and give the student his best five marks. Francophones presently marking the GCE know nothing about that".

This marker also thought it was ludicrous Mbella Mbappe's markers would quarrel with the essay-type answers tabled by Anglophone candidates.

TAC markers really blew their top on being told Friday October 23 by the gendarmes that there were firm fresh instructions from Mbella Mbappe not to let anyone into the centre.

Some of the teachers, who drove into Yaoundé overnight

and even shopped their travelling bags to the Essos Marking centres were for a rapid show down with the gendarmes. Other groups of teachers who somehow found their way into the ENS and Essos centres, were for a rapid eviction of the Mbella Mbappe markers.

They were, however, dissuaded by the appearance of TAC President Andrew Azong Wara last Friday late in the afternoon. It was a mammoth crowd of teachers that thronged the gardens to Lycée Bilingue Yaoundé to listen to Mr. Azong Wara.

Mr. Azong Wara praised the teachers for their courage, steadfastness and care for the future of Anglophone children. Mr. Azong Wara was his usual sly self when he said “in such battles as we have fought, there is no winner and no loser”, intimating further that “we all know” who had won. He revealed that the Secretary of State for Education, Mr. Yunga Teghen, had told the moderators and chief examiners to assume their function totally.

Mr. Azong Wara explained further that the Secretary of State could not have said anything much clearer. The chief Examiners and Moderators were to go over the already corrected scripts all weekend and pass judgement. Markers who did not qualify were to be thrown out. The TAC top brass said the moderators will do their assessment and hand in their reports Sunday 31 for marking was to kick off Monday November 1, Mr. Azong Wara said. He stressed that the exercise would be carried out in the Essos and ENS centres simultaneously.

He called on teachers to be tolerant and pre-empt actions of “enemies of what we want to do”. Any irregularities, he pointed out, should be reported to the executive for immediate action.

He told teachers that if need be for decisions that are aimed at counteracting any further bad faith from the government, “we are not afraid of anybody or anything.”

While some Francophone markers had the guts to attend the meeting, a lot of them shivered when this crowd of Anglophones thundered the Cameroon National Anthem after short prayer before the meeting. Most Francophone markers smuggled themselves into the school canteen from where they watched in awe and bewilderment at the unfolding of the new

page of Anglophone patriotism.

The pressure is already building as some unqualified and unwarranted markers have sworn not to leave the GCE scripts alone. These fellows claim that they were appointed by the Minister and only “Mr. Mbella Mbappe can get rid of us,” according to one of them.

After monitoring activities of the GCE marking centres at Lycée Bilingue Essos and ENS Yaoundé on Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd November 1993, CAPTAC Yaoundé branch noted that:

1. The qualified examiners under the leadership of TAC effectively reported en masse for marking at the marking centres early from Wednesday the 27th October 1993 and we congratulate them for it.
2. Given that various methods were used to prevent these examiners from performing their duties, the Secretary of State No.1 of the Ministry of Nation Education signed two “Service notes” on 1st November, 1993; one appointing Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors of the GCE Secretariats and the other ordering the handing over of the coordination and supervision of the marking exercise to the substantive moderators and Chief Examiners. This was supposed to mark the effective start of the marking of the 1993 GCE. Unfortunately, the diabolic forces that have been working in the background to render the 1993 GCE certificates unacceptable to the Anglophone and International communities have blocked the takeover from the mercenary markers.
3. We understand that this background group is fighting hard to maintain a contract of 22 million francs given out to the wife of one of the notorious Rectors (or should we say Wreckers) to produce badges for the markers. Another contract of 46 million francs for the preparation of “snacks” for the markers is understood to have been awarded to another of them. We are aware that all these juicy contracts were meant to divert money put aside for the marking of the 1993 GCE, for the personal enrichment of members of the group.
4. The only justifiable involvement of Mr. Titus Edzoa

(Minister of Higher Education), Mr. Peter Agbor Tabi (Rector of University Yaoundé I) and Mr. Ndong Norbert (Director of ENS Yaoundé) in activities linked to the marking of the GCE, ought solely to be limited to the provision for the marking exercise, of the state infrastructure at the ENS Yaoundé under their control. But it is now clear to us that the Minister of Higher Education is at the centre of the background group that is bent on destroying the 1993 GCE Certificates of our children. The open defiance of the authority of the Secretary of State No.1 of the Ministry of National Education of November 1st 1993 by agents of the Minister of Higher Education, who refused to hand over the marking to the qualified examiners is clear proof of this. Until this attempt to destroy the education system of the Anglophones in this country, we have known GCE examinations to be the preserve of the Minister of National Education.

CAPTAC Cannot Accept that the education of Anglophone children be toyed with by a shadowy pressure group, whose members belong to an occult society and who are bent on destroying unity of this country. We feel that it is once more incumbent on us to protect the standards of the 1993 certificate of our children. This is why we give the Minister of Higher education and his gang until *12 Noon Thursday, November 4th 1993* to respect the terms of the Service Notes of the Secretary of State No.1 for National Education by arranging the handing-over of the supervision of the marking exercise to the substantive Moderators and Chief Examiners and stop meddling in the GCE marking process.

In case of failure to respect this deadline, we will have no option but to go into the streets country-wide.

We shall spare no effort to see to it that our children get the certificates they deserve. (Done in Yaoundé this 2nd day of November 1993. By order of CAPTAC, Yaoundé Branch, Peter N. Chateh, President.)

It was thus most reassuring to read in the next issue of *Cameroon Post* (No. 0189 November 10-17, 1993 p.16) Chiabi Achuosih-Nyouth's report that:

The Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) has

effectively taken over the marking exercise of the 1993 GCE scripts in Yaoundé. This action undertaken mid last week, was revealed to the Yaoundé chapter of the Confederation of Anglophones Parent Teacher Association of Cameroon (CAPTAC) by the National President of TAC Mr. Azong Wara last Thursday.

According to Mr. Azong Wara, though some problems still remain, the pirate markers and charlatans have been flushed out of the marking exercise through technical means noting that only one Francophone has been allowed to mark Physics at the A levels. "We now have the right markers and we are marking all the scripts", he declared amidst applause.

It was also revealed that although flushed out by TAC, the Charlatans and fake GCE markers were very much around; they felt that they have been insulted and humiliated. They have continued to hang around marking centres regretting that they have to miss their FCFA 2,500 a week and sumptuous meals and drinks.

All markers and the Secretariat staff were called upon to be very vigilant. While TAC flushed out the pirate markers, the government on its part has also said no more of the facilities it offered the charlatans.

According to Joseph K. Bannavti (*Cameroon Post* No. 0189 17-24 November 1993 p. 11), the marking of the 1993 GCE was yet another expression of Anglophone solidarity. Plagued by a multitude of traumatising problems, the examiners held themselves together, forgetting the material temptations that would have lured them away from their duty. Minister Mbella Mbappe of National education might have thought that by refusing to settle the legitimate dues of those Anglophone gentlemen and ladies, they would abandon their duty and thus decamp from the marking centres. The plan failed woefully.

Some markers shackled up with university students, others managed it with colleagues resident in Yaoundé, and yet others with friends. In some cases local Francophone landlords exercised vile animosity by threatening to increase the rents of tenants hosting the examiners. Other landlords argued that if more than one person occupied a room, they would have to pay for filling up toilets, using their water etc. The tragic experience was heightened when a marker actually passed a night in a

parked taxi for want of a place to go. The next morning, our subject got up cleaned his eyes and took off to mark the GCE. Anglophone parent however, came to rescue the situation. Worse still, many markers trekked several kilometres to the marking centres.

At lunch time, several markers (especially at Essos) either forgot their hunger by concentrating seriously on scripts, (there was no choice anyway), chipping in to buy and share lunch or strolling around releasing huge clods of smoke from their cigarettes. Yet, there were others who could afford a satisfactory meal each day.

The job was hard, very hard to bear. And when finally they were informed that all of them would have only ten thousand francs each from government, they turned their backs on the “insult”, but continued their marking.

When the National president of CAPTAC turned up Tuesday November 9 with a FCFA250,000 donation, many markers wept. It was a line moment in Anglophone Nationalism. The parents were greeted with deafening applause from one marking hall to the other. Spontaneous singing took over as tears ran down several cheeks. This was a great moment.

Most of the lyrics were heart warming and several more adapted from existing songs were simple pathetic and chilly.

It became a daily event. Singing shook the roofs of the marking halls at the top of each hour as solidarity funds to help the most needy surfaced.

Songs like: “Courage brothers were given a fourth stanza viz” “Mbella Mbappe we have won

We have suffered as you had wished

We have worked with all our might

Trust in God and do the right”

The Animal Farm anthem was given a Cameroonian coloration

Beasts of Bamenda

Beasts of Buea

Beast of every land and clime

Harken to my joyful tidings

of the golden future time

Soon or late, the day is coming

Tyrant man shall be overthrown.

And the fruitful fields of Cameroon
Shall be trod by Anglophones along

Religious songs equally received their own twist and “I have decided to follow Jesus” became “I have decided to the GCE”, while the universal “We shall overcome... someday” and “Home again... when shall I see my home” remained unmodified. Very original composition like “loser, you go lose again Kpata Kpata” were also rife.

If ever Cameroonians knew anything about genuine nationalism then new folder opened by Anglophones in the GCE marking centres this year, is a landmark. Wrangling and bickering is still going on in the education ministry as to how, a famished people can refuse a cold ten thousand francs. A majority of the examiners, in solidarity with Anglophone parents are thinking about going back home. They have learnt, and in a very bitter way, that accepting any promise from this government is tantamount to believing that men can suddenly develop wings.

Marking Ends, Examiners Leave for Home: Lessons to Learn

As the end of the marking exercise drew near, National President of TAC, Andrew Azong Wara, issued this message to all examiners (*Cameroon Post* No. 0189 November 17-24, 1993 P.15):

We are pleased to note that despite the numerous difficulties, the marking exercise of the end-of-course examinations for the 1993 academic year is gradually drawing to a successful end. It will be noted that the department of examinations has done all in her powers to either provoke us to act unwisely as a group or to frustrate our collective zeal to do the job peacefully and genuinely. We have stood our grounds.

Collectively we have demonstrated that we were determined and resolved in getting our Board installed. We made a promise and we have honoured our promise. We have marked the examinations despite the numerous hardships we encountered. Thanks immensely for such wonderful sacrifice on our part. Many people did not take us serious but today we can move about proudly because of our collective steadfastness.

The Board, our brain child is now with us. It is our duty to ensure that it survives. Its survival will depend, by and large,

on the collective will of all of us. This will materialize only through education from the grass-roots. In this wise, then, we will depend on each one of you to educate the masses as to the realities of a Board and the advantages (to all of us) that go with it.

In view of the late start of the 1993/94 academic year for the English Speaking schools, we are launching an earnest appeal to all teachers to sacrifice extra time to teach in the interest of our children. Excellence has been our watch word all along. So our children should be well prepared for various examinations annoyed them by the Board.

As you leave the marking centres to return home do not forget to lavish praise where it is due but to exercise caution when apportioning blame. May God grant us safe passage home.

Not everybody who came to mark the GCE returned home in good health or alive. One of those unfortunate markers was Mrs. Diom. This is how *Cameroon Post* (No. 0191 November 24-1 December, 1993 p.15) reported her death:

GCE Markers Wednesday November 17, 1993, and CAPTAC Yaoundé Branch, received with shock and profound regrets the sad news of the passing away in Yaoundé of Mrs. Diom Née Theresia Nginbong Yuh, a teacher and an Assistant Chief Examiner of O/Level Chemistry. Despite her poor health and knowing fully well that the marking of the GCE this year was far from normal, Mrs. Diom decided to come to Yaoundé to mark.

In an eulogy for her, the Yaoundé CAPTAC branch President, Mr. Peter N. Chateh, said:

It is with deep regrets that we witness here today, the burial of Mrs. Theresia Diom nee Yuh. Mrs. Diom was one of those who sacrificed everything to be in Yaoundé to mark the GCE and died there. The marking of the GCE this year was far from normal, people who came to mark were people who had to do so out of their personal pockets. Mrs. Diom decided, in spite of everything to come to Yaoundé to mark the GCE. Her death for us is a death in the battle field. She has died fighting for a course, fighting to maintain a culture for generations to come. She is dead suddenly but the culture she stood for remains.

We know this is very heart rending. It is really painful to lose somebody of her calibre. But she is dead. It pains us all. But

since we can no longer see her we say the Almighty knows better what is good for us. The Almighty knows when to bring us on earth and when to take us away.

It is sorrowful and painful to us all. But let us wait for a while, let us pray for a while. Why did God take her at this time? God alone knows what he reserves for us. God alone can plan for us. Let us think about all this and know that we cannot go against his will. We can only take what he has given us. He gave us Theresia. He has taken away Theresia. May his will be done. May her soul rest in peace.

Similarly, the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) also sent in their condolence message to Late Diom's family through Mr. Samuel N. Mfonyam and Mrs. Faustina Yembe, both First National Vice President and National Financial Secretary respectively. Despite the hard times, TAC handed a token envelope of FCFA 50,000 to the family.

Late Mrs. Diom Theresia was born on August 11, 1956, and studied in Our Lady of Lourdes College, CPC Bali, Yaoundé University and ENS Yaoundé. She leaves behind four children.

With losses such as the death of Mrs. Diom, and with most of the markers barely struggling to keep body and soul together in the battle against misery and frustration, nothing could spur the markers more than the following words of appreciation and encouragement (dated November 20, 1993) from a fellow victim of the struggle, Mr. Shoh Jacques Woriwum, who lost an eye fighting for the board:

To all GCE Markers in Yaoundé,

Greetings to Markers

Dear Colleagues,

While observing a two month bed rest following the loss of my eye on the 12th of October 1993 in the on going struggle, my family and I deem it very necessary to extend you our fraternal greetings and words of encouragement.

We note with distress as events unfold, the difficulties you are facing in the task of marking or remarking thousands of scripts for long hours under very harsh economic conditions. But we are also proud of the high level diplomacy applied by

accepting the challenge of coming to do the job here, to corner the trickster.

We strongly recommend that while nosing around for some liquidity from “high quarters” we encourage you to continue the exercise to the end no matter the odds. This, to elucidate to the blind world around us the virtues embedded in the heritage we are defending *at all cost*, for our future generations.

Thanks for courage!

Yours sincerely,

Shoh Jacques Woriwum, B.A. English-Uni YAO,), M.A. UCNW,
Bangor - UK)

Rodcod Gobata (*Cameroon Post* No. 0191 November 24 - December 1, 1993 P. 5) commends the level of sacrifice and endurance shown by Anglophones during the crisis. He argues that:

We cannot close the first chapter of our GCE struggle without remarking about the level of sacrifice and endurance that people are usually willing to undergo for a cause they believe in. Do you know that some of the GCE markers were walking several kilometres (yes, on foot) every day to and from the marking centres and also nearly starving? But that did not deter them from their determination to mark. Before the GCE markers reached here, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe and his small clique of frauds masquerading as public officials had already shared and squandered 290 million francs out of the 300 million allocated from public coffers for the marking of the GCE So by the time the over 2 000 real markers got here only 10 million francs was left in the GCE budget. Did we not suspect before that the bottom line beyond all the manoeuvres and gymnastics was a matter of cool raw cash?

So, with only FCFA10 million now left as the GCE budget, they proposed to pay each marker a flat rate of FCFA 10,000 for the entire marking exercise, as against the FCFA 25,000 per week plus free snacks they had been paying the fake markers. They thought that there were only two possible ways in which the GCE markers could react to this insult; accept the pittance in their desperation or reject it and riot. Their anti-riot zombies were even put on full alert that day. Had the markers

fallen for the bait and in their destitution, taken the FCFA 10,000, that would have greatly assuaged their consciences and relieved them of the duty ever to explain what they did with FCFA 290 million before the GCE markers arrived. Had the markers, on the other hand rioted, they would have brutalized them in typical fashion, dispersed them, and then proceeded to publish the fake results they had been preparing to publish before the arrival of the real markers. But the markers took a third option which they hadn't foreseen: they firmly rejected the FCFA 10,000 insult but did not riot and calmly continued with the marking in their penury.

All Cameroonians of goodwill and all Southern Cameroonians of both good and bad will owe the GCE markers a standing ovation for their demonstrable patriotism. The New Deal regime of Professor Paul Biya is indeed politically very short-sighted. Here is a regime that is full of professors. Its supposed leader is even a professor himself. Check around the world. If you find any other regime, anywhere on earth, with half as many professors in its governmental ranks as the Biya regime, you should report to the son of Gobata. This regime of professors deserves multiple entries in the Guinness Book of Records for multiple reasons. One of them is that its professors are no match for primary and secondary school teachers. As those in contact with the grassroots, it is a wonderful thing that the GCE markers have come to Yaoundé and seen and experienced for themselves what we are all up against. They will carry the message to all nooks and corners of Southern Cameroons. The next battle could be a walkover.

The son of the Gobata is particularly gratified with the way the GCE struggle has gone. For the first time in the past three years this was the only occasion that *NO TRIFLING MATTER* called for all hands to deck at approaching danger and nearly all hands really went on deck.

Atabe Ettanki (*Cameroon Post* No. 0191 November 24 - December 1, 1993 P.15) describes the formal ending of marking in Yaoundé thus:

As at Saturday, November 20, 1993, the last script of the General Certificate of Education examinations (GCE) to be marked in Yaoundé had been graded. While it is needless to

blow up information data as concerns the number on the last scripts, and the lucky teacher who put the last mark there on, it is, however, still worth while to reckon that, whichever script it was, whoever the candidate should be and whoever marked it, that same script marked the end of an epoch: That of marking the GCE in Yaoundé. It also passes now at the border zone on which the dividing line between the muddled order and starting point of a new order (the most prestigious Anglophone institution in Cameroon today) the GCE Board, is drawn.

For their November 21, 1993 edition of *"Cameroon Calling"*, the production team moved over to the GCE marking centre at Essos where markers were finishing up on Friday, and met with Mr. S.N Fonyam, Vice President of TAC and an examiner himself. He was interviewed by Chris Eno Oben and Ebssiy Ngum:

CC: Do you think the examiners have done a good job despite starting late?

Fonyam: Despite the late coming, I think everybody has put himself well to the job and worked so sincerely and devotedly, I think we have done a good job.

CC: When you came there was the problem of markers who were not the regular markers involved in the exercise. How did you feed your selves into it and take control of the marking exercise?

Fonyam: Well, they were there. I think it was very difficult to get them out at first, but after sometime we identified all of them, consulted with the Vice Minister, that is First Secretary of State, and we settled the problem. Most of them left, except those who were capable of doing the job; we trained them.

CC: What were the immediate problems you faced, having to start something which others had begun?

Fonyam: The main problem was how to get those who were not really qualified, to mark go out of the campus of the centres of ENS and Essos. First of all, many of the Francophones

resisted very much. Some even said that they were appointed by the Minister, we had no right to talk to them or to ask them to leave the rooms. And some were there who thought that we were not competent to talk to them, and that we were people of their own quality, and that they were still examiners appointed and we had no right to ask them to leave.

CC: Before you started the marking exercise at last, there were rumours around that the scripts, some of them may have suffered some damage because of the transfer and things like that. What was the state of the scripts when you met them?

Fonyam: As far as I am concern, I see none which is destroyed; because I overheard this kind of rumour right in Bamenda. We were even told that some scripts were soaked. Since I came here, I have not seen any destroyed script. I am talking about myself because I am the assistant chief examiner for this branch. I haven't identified any destroyed script yet.

CC: And from the way the whole marking exercise has gone, are you satisfied with the work you have done? And do you think that results of this year's GCE cannot suffer from any challenge in terms of the quality of either the marking or the kind of grading that the students benefited from?

Fonyam: I don't think so. I think this exam is going to be as normal as the others ones. And as I have said, the basal difficulty there was, is the attempt to get those who were unqualified to leave the centres. Eventually, as the qualified markers took over, they have done the job well, and I hope that the results will be published in the very manner. The Secretariat has been established, and the persons in charge of the Secretariat are qualified and are sorting out things in the normal manner. And I am very hopeful that the exams this year will be like those before.

CC: There is a certain problem that comes to mind when we think of the fact that you have come to the end of the

marking exercise. Most teachers are here and some are stranded we hear. How are you coping with this kind of a situation in your capacity as the vice president of TAC?

Fonyam: Eh the greatest problem is that of transportation from here back to their various destinations in the South West Province and in the North West Province. We have appealed to parents of Anglophone origin basically based in Yaoundé, South West Province and North West Province to come to the aid of these stranded examiners. I'm glad to say that there is some response, positive response from Yaoundé and Douala and a few days ago the North West Province sent in a bus to the capacity of fifty passengers to take up some of the stranded markers. Well, actually, that's great as some of them don't have something to spend. They don't have a mite. They depend on the charity of individuals and friends.

CC: Are you saying that the Minister of National Education didn't make available any money for transportation?

Fonyam: They made available money only for transportation to this place, which was eight thousands, even though many people didn't have that. But even for those who had, it was not enough for someone to live on in Yaoundé for three weeks. That is not enough even for your accommodation, left alone for your food and your movement by taxi everyday to and from the marking centre.

CC: Has this been usual practice over the years for the markers to take care of themselves when they are in Yaoundé?

Fonyam: Of recent that has been the case, but the teachers were given money. Taking the example of last year, every marker was given one hundred thousands francs, and he or she could manage that for staying here a few days and for returning to her destination.

CC: How much have you received this year, each marker as I was going to say?

Fonyam: I have received nothing. All the markers have received nothing.

CC: But we heard at one point that the Ministry of Nation Education was going to make it possible for markers to carry out the exercise in Yaoundé without any difficulties. Something like the three hundred million francs at the centre, what happened?

Fonyam: Before we arrived here we learnt that the Minister of National Education had got that money spent by way of paying the unqualified markers; I understand some received one hundred thousand francs each, some received twenty-five thousands and some received ten thousands a week. Of that money, I understand and I hear two hundred and eighty million was already spent before we arrived. So we arrived, and people were desperate for over a week. Some had to trek from Etok-Egbe and far distant places to arrive the centre. Some could not even have money to eat. I understand some examiners had accommodation with students who didn't have money themselves, and so had to sock gari and eat every morning; eventually they didn't have the money even to sock the gari. So when we appealed to the ministry for the money we were supposed to have but which was not forthcoming, we were told that we were to be given ten thousand francs each. So that was rather provocative and the markers or the examiners refused, they turned that down, saying that was an insult.

CC: Do you feel that the ministry of national education is financially indebted to markers this year?

Fonyam: It is quite clear they are. I'm not very sure what is by rumours, but the Minister said he could not spend twice; that is to say the money he had used to pay the unqualified markers was already spent, and that he didn't have any more money to spend on us who had just arrived. The PM was quite sympathetic at one time. He gave us a donation of two million which we divided among ourselves, FCFA 1000

each just to help us eat.

In good journalism, it is said you should not condemn anybody no matter how much you stand to gain by so doing, without first of all giving him the opportunity to defend himself in the face of the rumours his actions have generated. The "*Cameroon Calling*" crew were thus practising good journalism when they invited the Secretary of State No.1, Mr. Yunga Teghen, to substantiate the allegation that his Ministry had squandered the FCFA 300 million originally reserved for the qualified markers of the GCE.

CC: Public opinion, especially Anglophone, is very apprehensive of relations with government officials, especially as there seems to be a number of hitches in communication. I decided to meet the secretary of state No.1 at the Ministry of National Education, Mr. Yunga Teghen. I wanted him to explain if the government made some commitments to teachers before they came to mark the GCE, but later renege on them.

Yunga: I must say that the situation isn't exactly what you are describing. I know there is a small problem of liquidity, and this is what most of the markers are unwilling to understand. But any Cameroonian of goodwill will know that at this particular moment when civil servants have gone for almost 4 months without salaries, there are serious liquidity problems. We had to pay off the former markers, and what was left we tried and paid transport for those who came from Boyo, Bamenda or from any other Province without receiving transport. Some people will take it late because of errors committed by them, that their names are not on the lists that were submitted to us. And when their names came later on, we had now to look for money. Right now that we are talking, we have a cheque in our hands, but we are not able to cash this cheque. And I told many of them to go back and as soon as this cheque is cashed, we will send money to their various delegations. We have a list of all the markers, and we know from which Provinces they come. So

that fear should not exist at all. For now we are not owing anybody transport allowance; what we are owing them is that small exceptional allowance [*fortfaire*] that government decided to give them to pay their taxis or even to buy a sandwich. As I say, they have been promised, I made the promise myself. So it is a question of the teachers having patience that with time this money will come. If we couldn't pay it here, it is not the fault of any of us, just that there is no liquid cash in hand.

CC: There is this talk of 300 million. I don't know whether you have heard about it?

Yunga: To me those are made-up stories. I have read it in some papers, I have read it in some handwritten letters signed by some people whose names I think I don't need to mention. I think those are all stories built on rumours.

Among those Mr. Yunga Teghen had in mind when he talked of people and papers spreading unfounded rumour about his ministry, were the executive members of CAPTAC Yaoundé branch and *Cameroon Post*. He most probably read this account by Tamfu Sammy and Berinyuy Willie Shiyntum (*Cameroon Post* No. 0189 November 17 – 24, 1993 p.11) before his interview with “*Cameroon Calling*”:

Anglophones in Yaoundé and beyond have been called upon to speedily come to rescue of Anglophone GCE markers who are being held hostage over finances by the Ministry of National Education official.

The FCFA 300 million collected by Mr. Mbella Mbappe from the Treasury and earmarked for GCE marking has been rapidly swindled by Mr. Mbella Mbappe, Dr. Peter Agbor Tabi (whose wife was awarded a FCFA 22 million contract to produce badges!) and Mrs. (Drs.) Andela who awarded herself a FCFA 16 million contract to prepare sandwiches for the teachers. Mrs. Andela's sandwiches consist of a loaf of bread and a few leaves of lettuce and a tiny bottle of Coca Cola.

TAC markers are today stranded because their dues have not been settled. The markers need help badly especially

transport to ferry them to the Essos and ENS marking centres and eventually back home. They need food badly. The GCE problem took a new twist all week last week when news circulated around the two marking centres that all the examiners would be given FCFA 10,000 each for their upkeep in Yaoundé. Government had tricked TAC into sending markers to Yaoundé on the understanding that it would provide adequate financial assistance.

This news came as a shock to the examiners who had earlier been told the FCFA 300 million was set aside for marking of the GCE. The money is all gone. The unqualified Mbella Mbappe markers were given hefty sums of scripts that were later marked again by TAC examiners only FCFA 10 million was available for 2100 qualified markers.

The question now rooming in the air is: what has been done with the huge amount of FCFA 300 million allocated for the exercise. Clearly; the Minister of National Education and his cohorts have within a month diverted some FCFA 290 millions. The check list of expenditure presented by MINDUC officials is bewildering: FCFA 6 millions were used for buying toilet tissues, FCFA 22 million for examiners' badges (more than a thousand eight hundred markers do not have the badges), FCFA 46 million for snacks (sandwich and coke) while the pirate markers were paid their outstation allowances and script money:

An Insulted People

November 9th 1993 was a solemn and serious moment of reflection for TAC markers at both centres. While the pirate and mercenary markers were put on a weekly stipend of FCFA 25,000 plus extra as snacks with all their dues settled, the fact that TAC markers were pledged only FCFA 10,000 per marker was seen as an insult of the highest degree. As one of the examiner said in the prayer on that Tuesday, TAC markers had not only been insulted, but trampled upon, hurt and ridiculed simply because these worth ladies and gentlemen never wanted to disrupt education in Cameroon. In addition, being fully aware of the subterfuge by Mr. Mbella Mbappe and his clique made up of the likes of Peter Agbor Tabi and Mrs. Andela that FCFA 10,000 will cause teachers to down their pens and the gendarmes called in to ruthlessly send them out. They would then call in

poachers and publish results. Teachers resolved to remain steadfast to their umbrella association, TAC and mark the exam, money or no money. In the same vein, they viewed the ministry's action as a snare. Accepting the FCFA 10 million meant partaking in the swindled FCFA 300 million. Consequently they went for sharing what ever little food and money was available. Some suggested that the various branches of CAPTAC be informed about the plight of GCE markers so that if there is a way, they might come to aid. Nonetheless, teachers accepted FCFA 8000 each for those who did not receive their transport requisitions to Yaoundé since some markers had theirs. The teachers' refusal to accept this chicken feed was seen as salutary because this dying government thinks they can use money as a bait to make TAC markers sell their consciences in this period of financial drought.

Yaoundé CAPTAC's Magnanimous Gesture

Following the rejection of Mbella Mbappe's FCFA 110,000 despite their incredible problems like walking long distances to the centres daily and spending long days with empty stomachs CAPTAC Yaoundé branch, Wednesday November 10, 1993 donated the sum of FCFA 250 to teachers at both marking centres. CAPTAC also issued a press release dated 10th November 1993 appealing for more aid through Anglophone Churches on Sunday or at extra-ordinary CAPTAC meeting on Sunday 11th November 1993 designed to make feasibility studies and transport the desperate markers to their various Provinces this week. Meanwhile some Anglophone parent and chief examiners have been preparing food for the very needy markers at the centres.

Simon Achidi Achu's chips in CFA 2 million.

While Yaoundé CAPTAC's FCFA 250000 was received markers with outstanding ovation, PM Achidi Achu's FCFA2 million to teachers as one of Anglophone parents was receive with mixed feelings and even hot debate. Some saw the gesture in line with CPDM gimmick of always bribing people with money and threatened to refuse taking it arguing that Achidi as PM ought to have used his good office and fought for the right money from government coffer to the teachers instead of quietly providing

teachers with FCFA 1000 each. Others argued that as a committed Anglophone parent, Achidi Achu ought to have channelled his FCFA 2 million through CAPTAC Yaoundé branch. They received the money with the hope that it came from Pa Achidi Achu (an Anglophone parent) in good faith. The teachers expressed the wish that it was not Mbella Mbappe's FCFA 10,000 coming back in another form.

As TAC markers, especially those correction O/L English language whose transport requisition have not been paid, continue to be held hostage over finances by the Ministry of National Education official, reliable sources disclosed to *Cameroon Post* that PM Achidi Achu, head of government, is doing everything possible to squeeze some money to give to markers in order to efface government's bad image. Teachers have plans to carry their bags on their heads and trek to the Provinces if that became necessary.

Some markers even went to CRTV radio to announce that they were on their way home, but reaching there, they discovered that announcements over CRTV radio were paid for. Principals and proprietors of colleges are called upon to take special note not to punish their teachers if they come back late to resume duty.

Indeed, Mr. Yunga Teghen had every reason to accuse CAPTAC for most of the bad publicity his ministry had received over the GCE issue. Throughout the struggle, CAPTAC, via its Yaoundé chapter and in constant concertation with the North West chapter through the president Mr. Augustine F. Ndangam in Bamenda, showed exemplary and unalloyed solidarity with TAC and stranded GCE markers. They issued press releases, organised meetings, and appealed to concerned Anglophones to pool their energies and resources in order to protect their cherished educational system. Thus for example, CAPTAC issued a press release condemning government for having "tricked" qualified GCE examiners into coming to Yaoundé on the understanding that government would provide them with adequate financial assistance. They accused government of having diverted to other ends the FCFA 300 million set aside for the marking of the GCE. Faced with this situation, CAPTAC made an appeal to the public to give whatever they could to rescue the desperate markers. "Kindly give any help you have at

your church service on Sunday or at an extra-ordinary CAPTAC meeting on Sunday 14/11/93." This call for Anglophones to offer even their widow's mite, was taken seriously throughout the country. Over a million francs was raised in record time. Mr. Pafe of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications distinguished himself in a personal crusade during which he raised over FCFA 800,000 for CAPTAC. Money came in from Douala, Edea and elsewhere. Others, transporters for example, contributed in kind; and so did Yaoundé University students who generously lodged and shared whatever they could afford as food, with the bulk of the markers.

Other messages and communiques by CAPTAC included:

- a. an expression of thanks on January 21, 1994, by the President of CAPTAC Yaoundé, to all Anglophone well-wishers:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Expression of Gratitude

The Confederation of Anglophone Parent-Teacher Associations (CAPTAC), Yaoundé Chapter, wishes to sincerely thank and congratulate all those who generously contributed financially and otherwise during the GCE crisis. By your selfless sacrifices, you contributed immensely towards the achievement of something which, for us, remains completely priceless, namely a credible examination Board for present and future generations.

As we are preparing to consolidate our victories, we know that we can confidently hang our hopes on your solidarity and further sacrifices.

May God continue to help us in our struggles.

Yours sincerely,

Peter N. Chateh
(For and on behalf of CAPTAC)

- b. A letter of thanks to all 1993 qualified GCE markers, cared through the President of TAC Bamenda:

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Letter of thanks

On behalf of CAPTAC, Yaoundé chapter, I am thanking you very sincerely for your total involvement in the recent struggle for the creation and installation of the GCE Board in Buea, through the generous moral, material and financial contribution you made.

Your commitment to the course of Anglophone culture and education in this country was thus indicated; and I have no doubt that you will continue to demonstrate such, especially now that we are again seeking funding for the GCE Board.

I am convinced that in the face of the present almost insurmountable difficulties through which most Cameroonians are going you will continue to show proof of your parotic commitment to our Anglophoneness by standing up to be counted in our hour of need.

I wish you and those who are dear to you God's blessing in 1994.

Done in Yaoundé on January 19, 1994
For and on Behalf of CAPTAC, Yaoundé Chapter

Yours sincerely

Peter N. Chateh
President

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- c. A word of appreciation to all transport companies that assisted in the transportation of stranded GCE markers. Addressed to the Managers of Le Bien est Bien, Beauty Express, Savannah Express and Amumba Express transport

companies, the letter read:

A Word of Appreciation

Following our appeal for help to transport stranded GCE markers back to their stations, you readily came in to help us take them back home.

Some of you carried them at reduced prices while some others transported them free of charge.

The help you rendered is immeasurable and we will like to thank you for all you did to help salvage the situation.

We are now quite aware that your buses are ours too. May God guide you in your daily activities during this new year.

Done at Yaoundé on 19 January 1994, for and on behalf of
CAPTAC

Peter N. Chateh

President

d. an attestation recognising the GCE which read:

*To Whom It May Concern
Recognition of GCE Results*

Pursuant to our several communiques during the 1993 GCE crisis in Cameroon, CAPTAC declares as follows.

Following the satisfactory resolution of the GCE crisis and the successful marking of all the GCE examination scripts by the qualified markers and subsequent proclamation of results, the *Confederation of Anglophone Parent-Teacher Association of Cameroon* (CAPTAC), in view of its earlier threat not to recognize the 1993 GCE result, hereby declares, for the attention of parents, candidates, international educational institutions and agencies, and to that it fully recognizes the 1993 GCE results as proclaimed by the Ministry of National Education.

Done at Yaoundé on 19 day of January, 1994, for and on
behalf of CAPTAC

Peter N. Chateh

President

- e. Letters on October 29 and November 16 1993, to the Secretary of State No. 1, Ministry of National Education, concerning the 1993 FSLC examination:

Honourable Minister,

*Marking of the First School Leaving Certificate
Examination Scripts for the Francophone Provinces*

We have the honour to draw your attention to the fact that the 1992/93 First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations which were taken in June 1993 have so far not been marked. In effect, the usual markers of these examinations were in solidarity with those concerned with the GCE Board problem. After all, both examinations form a continuum.

The First School Leaving Certificate Examination in all the eight Francophone Provinces have always been marked and coordinated by the Provincial Delegation of National Education for the Centre.

As the F.S.L.C. examiners are now fully prepared to mark the scripts, we should be grateful if you would now instruct the Delegate to organise effective marking as a matter of urgency.

While thanking you in advance for your prompt action
We remain
Yours faithfully
Peter N. Chateh
President

Dear Sir

1993 FSLC Examination

The general Anglophone public is extremely anxious about the fate of the First School Leaving Certificate Examination for 1993 for the Francophone Provinces. Repeated attempts by the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) and the *Confederation of Anglophone Parent Teacher Associations of Cameroon* (CAPTAC) to get information from the authorities of the Ministry of

National Education have met with contradictory and often evasive responses.

In the interest of public peace, we are therefore sending a delegation of TAC and CAPTAC to you to be enlightened about the exact situation.

We would appreciate it if your Excellency would make a public declaration about what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the examination scripts are properly marked and the results published.

While hoping for an immediate response, we, have the honour to remain,

Yours faithfully
Peter N. Chateh
President

These letters were written following press reports on the marking of the FSLC. According to Partrick Ndikum Tanifom (*Cameroon Post* No. 0196 October 20-27, 1993 p.7), three months after some hungry mouths allowed themselves to be used by government in clandestinely marking this year's First School Leaving Certificate Examinations in the South West Province, a betrayal of the Anglophone cause, another group stinking with inordinate ambition also lent itself to the treacherous exercise in Garoua. The group comprising ten Anglophones and three Francophones according to a confidential report on the marking exercise marked 5,334 scripts in 12 days, September 24 to October 4, 1993.

The scripts came from 15 schools spread over four Provinces viz centre - 10 schools, Adamawa - 2 schools, Far North - 2 schools, and North Province - 1 school.

According to the report, "the marking team was personally coordinated by the provincial Delegate for National Education for the North, Mr. Yakouba Yaya, and assisted by the outgoing provincial inspector for Bilingualism Mr. Tasog Nchang Celestin. A reliable source close to the North Provincial delegation of National Education however notes emphatically that Mr. Tasog Nchang Celestin, who is an Anglophone, outrightly deceived the markers by telling them that there was

absolutely no reason for them not to mark since marking had already been done in the North West and South west Provinces. But only last week Tuesday October 12, the North West Delegate for Education chief Forbuzie Martin publicly admitted to thousand of protesters in Bamenda that the FSLC scripts are firmly in his keeping pointing out that marking was not going on anywhere in the North West Province.

The report finally observes that the marking team faced enormous problems the major one being “that of having enough teachers to do the work.” And though the report states that it is absolutely impossible for 13 teacher to correct 5354 scripts within record time, “it is surprising that the marking however took place”.

Thus, the above admission already casts doubts as to how effective the exercise, which is the first academic spring board of every child, was. Moreover, the case in point involves 892 children who most probably are into the Anglo-Saxon system of education, as a preference. The mercenary markers involved were:

Mr. Ngankam Kanga - LP EPMN -North
Mr. Thenda Pierre Jules - Principal College Mediba
Mr. Nkeng Fritz Nkumbe -INDEP - Garoua
Mr. Tabe Ebini John H/M GBPS, Garoua
Mr. Tchewouo Joseph - E.P. Wouro - Herssu
Mrs. Tasog Elizabeth SICHE - H/M, GBPS Garoua
Mrs. Enongene Agnes EBUDE - GBPS - Garoua
Mr. Abgor George Agbor - GBPS - Garoua
Mr. Fobiwe Fru Lawrence - GBPS - Garoua
Mr. Forkob Joseph - E.P Garoua I - II
Mr. Penn William Muluh - GBPS - Garoua
Mrs. Tabe Lucy (Secretary)
Mr. Tasoh Nchang Celestin-IPP/BIL- North

The schools involved concerned the following:

Extreme North - GBPS - North

- GBPS - Maroua

- GBPS - Yagoua

North Province - GBPS - Garoua

Adamawa - GBPS - Ngaoundéré

- GBPS - Banyo
- Centre Province - GBPS - Bafia
- GBPS - Mbalmayo
- GBPS - Mballa IV
- GBPS - Bastos
- GBPS - Essos I
- GBPS - Essos II
- GBPS - Essos III
- CENTRAT GBPS - I
- CENTRAT GBPS - II
- CENTRAT GBPS - III
- CENTRAT GBPS - IV
- GBPS - AWAE
- St. Joseph school Mvog Ada

f. Letter advising Mr. Gerald G. Ndikitum of G.B.H.S Maroua on how to get involved with the struggle:

Dear Mr. Ndikitum,

Thank you very sincerely for your letter just received. There is no problem forming TAC by All teachers in Maroua. Those in other places in the Far North can form theirs. TAC is already legalised.

With regards CAPTAC you can go ahead and form a Far North Confederation. You do not need to be many. It is enough for the PTAs to come together and elect their own executive. PTAs are in all schools. There is no question of legalisation although we have asked for it. Teachers who have children can be in both TAC and CAPTAC.

With regards the Board, it is because we formed our own and went out with Bamenda that the text of application was signed. I will soon send forms to you to collect money for the Board. We are asking children to pay as follows: Kindergarten FCFA 50, Primary FCFA 200. We know this regime will not give money. So, we shall start collecting money for it. Please, be in touch with all schools in the "Big North". Count them all and get all their addresses.

With regards the GCE *everything* has been remarked. All has gone on well. The detractor should hang their heads in shame. Francophones have acknowledged that our system is

better than theirs.

We have been collecting money to help thee markers. Yaoundé has given TAC FCFA 600,000; Douala has given FCFA 300,000; Bamenda has paid 50 places in buses. We are still struggling for more money. The main thing is accountability. We have to work in thee way we were brought up. We should be transparent when we collect money and send.

Let us remain in touch. We are a people.

May God bless you.

Yours sincerely

Peter N. Chateh

President

N.B. My phone is 31 22 06. You can get me from 6-8.30 a.m. 1.30 to any time in the night. Tuesdays & Thursdays I am absent from 6 to 9 p.m.

g. A letter of congratulations to the Members of the GCE Board Council Buea:

Dear Members of the Board and Colleagues,

Congratulations

We are delighted to congratulate you heartily for your brilliant election in to the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board's Council, the most prestigious Anglophone institution in Cameroon today.

The GCE Board is not just another Parastatal. Your job is to uphold the cultural and educational identity of a whole people, the English Speaking Community of Cameroon. The task is not easy, but we trust you can make it.

We believe the Anglo-Saxon qualities of democracy, objectivity, fairness, honesty, transparency and the trust in meritocracy above all else in choosing people to fill post, that are instilled in you all will help you surmount all problems no matter their origin.

We expect you to ensure the autonomy of the Board. We expect you to uphold the credibility and quality of the GCE

Examinations. We expect you to be transparent in your propositions for nominations into the various positions of the Board. We expect you to study objectively the Curriculum Vitae of all prospective candidates before making any appointments. You should ensure that the right people are employed and you should not hesitate to relieve inefficient employees of their duties on the Board.

The whole English-speaking Community of Cameroon is watching you. We are ready to support you in any positive action you undertake, but will criticise you if you make mistakes. You have the envious duty of continuing the writing of the history of the GCE Board so well begun by the Teacher's Association of Cameroon (TAC) and by the Confederation of Anglophone parent-Teacher Associations of Cameroon (CAPTAC). We look up to you with hope and we wish you well in your great endeavour.

Greetings and best wishes. May God bless and lead you.

Done at Yaoundé on the 16th November 1993.

For and behalf of the Chapter

Peter N. Chateh

President

Were one to rely solely on press reports, one might feel that the GCE saga was purely an affair for adults - the parents and teachers; and that the students or children were at best anxious spectators. Students and children contributed, enormously, in their own way. They showed their appreciation for the fight their teachers and parents were fighting on their behalf. One of such secondary school students, Nkaze Chateh, not only helped with the daily typing at the CAPTAC secretariat in Yaoundé, but expressed her gratitude to her parents and teachers through the following letter to CAPTAC:

Our lady of Lourdes Secondary School
P.O. BOX 92, Bamenda

9th November 1993.

To
The confederation of Anglophone
Parent-Teacher Associations of Cameroon (CAPTAC)
Yaoundé Branch

Dear Parents,

I have followed with interest and understanding, the priceless war you are fighting for our Anglophone Educational system. Further more, the General Certificate of Education cannot be over emphasized. It is very important for us. You have had yours already.

It was a pleasure participating in the war as a typist, but as one part of the war has been won, we children have to go to school.

On behalf of every other student, I will like to say thanks and may God bless and guide you.

With love

Nkaze Chateh

Chapter Eight

Lessons from the GCE Affair

Rodcod Gobata drew the following lessons from the GCE affair (*Cameroon Post* No. 190 November 17-24, 1993 p. 5): The French and their local marionettes and errand boys have put Anglophone Power to the test and seen for themselves what they are up against. As I remarked before, they showed a lot of wisdom in picking on the Anglophone educational system as the arena on which to test the success of their three-decade old policy of assimilation. Had they succeeded here, they would have known that they could over-run all the other areas without even token resistance. But we stood up like one man against them and they learned that “small no be sick”. We hope that their self-imposed delusions and illusions about having conquered and assimilated us have now disappeared. Silence is not consent and love of peace is not cowardice. We have only begun. We will demand justice and fair-play everywhere. We will demand admission of past wrongs and injustices and exact reparation, restitution and compensation. Freely and voluntarily we opted for this Union. Freely and voluntarily we shall remain in it or freely and voluntarily opt out of it again.

We won the GCE battle because we sank all illusive differences and stood up like one man against a common threat. Who again remembered the so-called North West/South West divide or Protestant/Catholic rivalry when we were engaged in the fight? The traitors amongst us stood out like sore fingers but they did not belong to one side of any putative divide. When the Chairman of the GCE Board was finally named in the person of Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, I listened carefully but I never heard anybody complain: “These graffi people have come again with their grab-all mentality” or “These South Westerners have again emerged from the wings to collect plums they never fought for and reap where they did not sow”. Instead, I heard witness after witness testifying to Mr. Dioh’s human qualities - his natural and acquired endowments, hard work, moral integrity. I don’t know Mr. Dioh personally and, up to this very moment, I still don’t know which corner of Southern Cameroons he comes

from, nor do I care, but I was satisfied when someone I trust, who knows him very well, described him as “firm, free and fair”.

All this proves that a meritocratic system is liable to satisfy everybody. In fact, only a meritocratic system is capable of satisfying everybody, as the son of Gobata has tried, *per longum et latum* to prove in this column (See *No Trifling Matter* of: December 12, 1991; January 6-13, & 15-22, 1992.) A meritocratic system is, moreover, inevitable in a democratic setting. The reason we value the GCE so much is that it is a meritocratic system of academic evaluation which, like justice, is completely blind to bio data. Let some of those helping to destroy the GCE today remember that, as children of poor peasants, they would never have made it in life under a less fair system than the GCE.

The son of Gobata will continue preaching this doctrine of meritocracy until everybody is fed up to choking with it. Where anybody comes from, has got nothing to do with it. The recent GCE Battle revealed something rather dramatic in this regard. It is a tale of two Agbor Tabis. Here are two brothers from the very same womb, one called John and the other Peter. They both played leading roles in the GCE imbroglio, on opposite sides of the battle line. One was ready to lay down his life for the future of our children, the other was ready to mortgage that same future for a few million francs. I tell you that the same womb can bring forth both light and darkness, angel and devil, the Messiah as well as the Judas who would sell him for less than thirty pieces of any metal. I had once drawn the contrasts between John Niba Ngu and Victor Anomah Ngu. That was before I came to know Chief John Agbor Tabi and Dr. Peter Agbor Tabi. I will surely return to this issue in future.

If you are a North Westerner, ask yourself whether you stand to gain more from Ekotang Elad and Simon Munzu or from Francis Nkwain and Honourable Tamfu. If you are a South westerner, ask yourself whether it is John Fru Ndi who is fighting for your interests and well-being or the likes of Nfon Mukete, “Paramount Chief Endeley or Oben Peter Ashu. We shall talk again when I hear your answers.

On his part, Francis Wache (*Cameroon Life* vol.111 No. 01 April/May 1994 p.6) had the following leadership lessons to

draw from TAC and the GCE crisis:

The valiant leaders of the Teachers Association of Cameroon, TAC, fought and won a noble battle. The GCE Board is a treasured reality in Buea. While the struggle lasted, those at the helm displayed remarkable courage. Throughout the fight, they convinced all hues of opinion in the Anglophone community of their probity, their unalloyed integrity and their elevated sense of sacrifice.

It all started - like most important things do - as a joke. A motley crowd of teachers, disillusioned with the cavalier manner of the GCE was being handled said enough was enough. TAC was born. The government, at first treated the organisation with supercilious disdain, then as teachers entered into high gear with their demands, the government countered these with fierce opposition.

The battle was rugged, ruthless; the teachers' determination was dogged, relentless. The government oscillated between the carrot and the stick. The teachers refused to bulge until the final victory was won.

All along, TAC kingpins were read to lose their jobs - even lay down their lives. They refused to be cowed by threats nor mollified by lollipops. It was either Board or nothing. In the end, it was the Board. The scramble for the spoils now began.

Curiously enough, those who had steered dear of the fray or had, worst still, castigated TAC crusaders as mere troublemakers emerged and undertook clandestine moves to harvest where they did not sow. Pusillanimous teachers who had earlier pooh-poohed the TAC initiative now metamorphosed into self-proclaimed custodians of the Anglophone educational legacy. The names of those jockeyed and jostled for posts at the Board would make you puke. In characteristic Cameroon fashion, they considered available positions at the Board as plum jobs rather than opportunities to serve. As soon as the bugle sounded the triumph, they trooped into share the booty.

Fortunately, they failed. For, on October 25, 1993 Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh was, of course, no outsider. He had been in the frontline of the struggle both as a concerned and committed parent as well as the somewhat repository of Anglo-Saxon education. It is common knowledge that he served brilliantly as

the pioneer Cameroonian Principal of the renowned College of Arts, Science and Technology (CCAST) Bambili. To this day Sylvester N. Dioh is still a legend in Bambili. His expertise took him beyond the shores of Cameroon to work for UNESCO. When his appointment came, it was generally believed that they had the right man for the right job. Dioh, most people agreed, was no pauper in search of where to line his pockets. Neither could he be accused of using the post to angle for some higher appointments. His meritorious career was more or less over. So far, so good.

Not so good for Andrew Azong Wara and Co. At the installation of Sylvester N. Dioh, Azong Wara virtually stole the show from the Chairman. He was lionized. Jubilant and ecstatic crowds mobbed him. But as soon as he was appointed Registrar, jarring notes were heard in the TAC symphony. Azong Wara's grouchy detractors gratuitously hurled invectives: he was called traitor, sell-out, stooge etc.

It is difficult to see how onlookers could have been called upon to lead the GCE Board. Who can say that at the time TAC was set up even the most optimistic could have seen victory, let alone carved out posts for themselves? None. It is preposterous to suggest that they fought for post. These rampant rumours must be squelched.

The officials of the GCE Board are now all in place. They are seasoned professionals. They are committed combatants. All they need is our support and a chance to prove their mettle. Let us not divert their concentration by raising parochial red herrings.

For those teachers whose eyes are bulging with envy, let them learn the lesson of leadership from TAC and, maybe, create another association. Try this: Teachers association for Defence of Anglophone Culture - TADAC. Here, at least, there is still room at the top.

Another lesson from TAC: one of those appointed on the Board, after self-assessment, declined the offer. We're right back to the good old Anglo-Saxon days.

Appointed to the challenging position of Board Registrar, Andrew Azong Wara is full of optimism. He has no doubt that he will succeed with the Board just as he succeeded with TAC. In the following interview accorded *Cameroon Life* (vol. 111 No. 01

April/May 1994 p.8), he spells out his vision for the GCE under the board.

Andrew Azong Wara is an example of a humble classroom teacher whose charismatic and pragmatic leadership, demonstrated during the struggle last year, for an independent GCE Examinations Board, earned him the honour of Cameroon Man of the Year 1993, and the appointment as the pioneer Registrar of the Board. He is brilliant by all standards. To have led TAC, CAPTAC and the entire Anglophone community not wining a bloodless educational battle against an intolerant and intransigent Francophone-led government is eloquent testimony that Azong Wara was "born to lead", perhaps with a silver spoon in his mouth. He championed a battle of wits and ideology. The pyrrhic victory, the GCE Board, was achieved against the greatest expectations of sceptics and cynics. Yet, the Board has been established in Buea, at the service for all and sundry.

Mr. Sylvester N. Dioh, the GCE Board Chairman, in his speech at the installation, March 23, 1994 of the professional and Technical officers of the Board in Buea, reminded Azong Wara that "The Registrar is and continues to be the chief Executive of the Board charged with the execution of Council decisions and coordinating the operations of your various services". He described Azong Wara as the nerve centre, while the sub-ordinates are the arteries.

Today, Azong Wara is at the pinnacle of the GCE Board in is capacity as Registrar. He may never get back to the classroom again to teach physics (his speciality), but will have to embrace the challenges that await him to get the Board going. In fact, a Registrar starting a parastatal such as the GCE Board without funds is like a pilot attempting to fly an aircraft without fuel. That is Andrew Azong Wara's headache at the helm of the Board since adequate government subvention is not forthcoming. Presently, he is grappling with the problems of setting the structures and appealing for public donation to facilitate the Board attain its prime objectives.

Cameroon Life's Associate Editor, Afoni Julius contacted the Registrar, Andrew Azong Wara, in his Molyko residence for an exclusive interview on wide ranging issues about the functioning of the Board and conduct of the 1994 GCE

examination. Excerpts:

Cameroon Life: How does the Board intend to give the GCE Examinations a new look as demanded by International Standards?

Andrew Azong Wara: We intend to model it after the University Of London Board Of Examinations, the West African Examination Council, the Hong Kong Examinations authority. In respect of financing organisation, marking and release of the results, the GCE will be given a complete new look. The moderation and question setting for GCE 94 have already been done. All the moderators and chief examiners involved in the exercise were paid on-the-spot and we intend to use this approach right through to the marking. The registration forms we sent out are drastically new and simpler to fill and complete. There are no bottle-necks of going through the treasury to pay money and so on. Very soon the writing material and question papers will already be delivered at the exams centres unlike in the past when questions either arrived late did not even get to some centres.

C.L: some parents complain about the high examination entry fees. What are the reasons for such an increase, understanding that the nation is plagued by financial crisis?

A.A.W: In the past it was FCFA 3500, whether for four or more subjects due to the fact that government highly subsidized the GCE exams. Government made it more as a social benefit than an assessment of academic input. Now that it is an independent examination Board that is handling the GCE, there are three avenues for finances. There is the government subvention which has been drastically reduced, exams fees which have to be charged commensurate to the expenditure (production cost) incurred in preparing the exam material, marking, etc; and public donation which is hard to come by since people have to be convinced to contribute. For the

moment, the main source of revenue of the Board is only the exam entry fees. The increase is relatively small as compared to what other exams Boards charge. For example, University London Exams Board charges FCFA 20,000 FCFA per Ordinary Level subject and the Advanced Level is about FCFA 36,000 FCFA per subject. In that case, if a candidate is writing 10 Ordinary Level subjects organised by the University of London exams Board, he/she pays about FCFA 200,000 FCFA, but with us a candidate will be expected to pay only FCFA 15,000 FCFA. It is by far cheaper since we are barely managing at this initial stage. The exam itself involves questions setting and printing, providing printing booklets, payment of moderators, chief examiners, invigilators, secretariat staff, markers and the University of London Board for vetting and printing of certificates. The Board requires a lot of money to conduct a high quality examination.

C.L.: How autonomous is the GCE Board?

A.A.W.: The presidential decree creating the Board states that it is a parastatal, with financial autonomy. But the Prime Minister's decree (text d'application) places the Board under the Supervisory Authority of the Minister of National Education. The Minister exercises only powers of supervision over the Board. It is very necessary because the Ministry of Education has to set the standards which have to be attained. The certificates shall be issued by the Board. Government has to oversee and ensure that the standards are maintained and valid. The Board takes its decisions as to what type of examinations they want to conduct, the timetable of the exam, manages its budget - all totally independent of government. It only renders account to the people and to the government. If the public contributes financially to the functioning of the board, they have the right to know how their money is being used. That is the extent to which the board is dependent on the Ministry. Outside that, the Board is totally independent. It appoints its own staff and as

concerns the Senior staff, the Ministry merely signs appointments proposed by the Council of the Board. It is just like putting the authority of the state seal.

C.L: How much has government offered in terms of subvention to enable the Board take off?

A.A.W: What happens is that at the beginning of each academic year, the Registrar proposes a budget to the Board Council, which then examines it for adoption, then it is forwarded to the Minister who is expected to make available what the Board demands from the budget allocated to his Ministry. This year, for instance, the Board proposed a budget to FCFA 600 million which has to come in the form of government subvention. After working on estimates as to what can be raised from exam entry fees and public donations, we discovered that with then 600 million, the Board will be able to handle the exam adequately without any hitch. Unfortunately, as at now, government has made available an initial subvention of about FCFA 93 million out of the FCFA 600 million that was requested. I think the delay might have caused because the Board was created in the middle of the financial year so the government may not have budgeted anything for the Board. So we are only hoping that in next fiscal year, government subvention will increase in respect of the budgetary demands.

C.L.: If government subvention is delayed as is the case now, will it not hamper your organisation of the 1994 GCE?

A.A.W.: Certainly, without enough money we can't execute the projects the Board has envisaged in giving the GCE examinations a new look. In the situation when government subvention is delayed, the projects of the board will consequently be delayed. And when the time for writing of exams reaches the Board will be ill - prepared for the conduct of such exams due to the financial handicap.

C.L.: What is the purpose of the Endowment fund?

A.A.W.: It is a permanent source of raising funds. We have decided to launch a campaign meant to painstakingly explain to the public what their role is vis-à-vis the Board. In the future it won't be necessary to go out such campaigns. Once the public understand what they have to do, and that the Board relies on them for survival, their contributions will be forthcoming. We intend to use the Teacher's association of Cameroon, TAC, and the Confederation of Anglophone Parent Teachers Association of Cameroon and CAPTAC, which both fought so hard for the realisation of the Board to get out to the people and solicit their support. We expect the contribution to be paid annually. It should be made clear that it is the Council that endorses each campaign to be carried out by the Board.

C.L.: Can you explain the link between the Board and the University of Buea?

A.A.W.: The text creating the GCE Board is a little hazy in that respect. The University of Buea is supposed to eventually develop an academic link. The Vice-Chancellors shall together with the Registrar of the Board and the Minister of National Education sign the certificates of exams conducted by the Board. We intend to get in contact with the authorities of the University of Buea and iron out the lapses in the text creating the Board. The University of Buea has even expressed concern that they do not know their role in the Board. Generally, moderators of examinations are appointed from the University. The University of Buea is expected to play a more forthcoming role in the appointment of moderators. Once that is established, I think we have a proper link.

C.L.: What plan does the Board have for Anglophone Technical education?

A.A.W.: The Board is coming up with new examinations for

Technical education. Since Cameroon already has a *Baccalaureat* Board which is supposed to control Francophone exams such as BAC, CAP Probatoire, BEPC. We of the CGE Board are supposed to handle all exams of an Anglo-Saxon nature. The English speaking technical education students have all along been writing Francophone exams such CAP, Probatoire and BAC technique. We are out to create counterpart examinations so that the candidate will decide which to in for, whether to write the technical and Vocational Certificate of Education organised by the GCE Board or the CAP, Probatoire and BAC technique conducted by the Francophone (BAC) exams Board. Most of our Anglophone candidates will more likely be interested in writing the Technical and Vocational Certificate of Education, TVCE, as ionised it CAP, Probatoire and BAC technique. The TVCE will not only be an equivalence to the CAP, Probatoire and BAC technique, it will be a certificate of a higher standard since unlike CAP which is written only after 4 years of technical education, the TVCE will be written after 5 years as is the case with the GCE Ordinary level or at the en of the 7th year in the same lines as the GCE advanced Level. Already, the Ministry of National Education has given his approval for the creation of the TVCE and by 1995 the examinations Board will introduce it. The technical education syllabuses will be changed to meet up with the standards that the GCE is setting. The Board will spend the first part of the 1994/1995 academic year to organise seminars, to orientate and sensitize the students pursuing technical education, there by gradually preparing the candidates for the TVCE.

C.L.: What steps have been taken by the GCE board to make up for the time lost by final year students attending government schools (as a result of the over three month's long civil servants strike?) Are there any plans to reschedule the academic year?

A.A.W.: Only the government can re-schedule the school year.

As an Examinations Board, we cannot make that policy because once the candidates are ready for the exams it must be given them. If we have to extend the exams further in order to give more time for the candidates that have not completed their year's work (because of the strike prevented them from attending school) to catch up, then what is going to be done to those who attended their classes regularly in private schools and are fully prepared for the exams? For example, if you tell St. Joseph's College Sasse authorities that the GCE examination has been postponed to September, they will ask you how they are going to feed and care for the students for such a length of time. It will then require them to start demanding extra-money from the parents which is not Sasse's fault that there was a strike. However, the Board did its best to strike a balance. The Board has rescheduled the GCE exams to start on July 4, 1994 which is to enable government school students to adequately prepare. We think that the private schools which have been functioning regularly will bear with the GCE Board authorities and will equally understand that it is necessary to make this extra sacrifice in the interest of the Government school candidates. We also hope that government schools will appreciate the rare gesture the Board has made to enable their candidates catch up.

C.L.: What exactly will be the connection between the Cameroon GCE Board and the University of London Examinations Board? Is the Board going to inherit the debts of the Ministry owed the London Board?

A.A.W.: Up till now, the University of London Board still prints the certificates for the Cameroon GCE, it does the vetting of the examination, (examines the setting of the GCE that we have done, checks the marking to ensure that it meets up with the international standards and gives their seal-stating that "we, (University of London Exams Board) recognises the GCE examination conducted in Cameroon this year to be of acceptable International standard". They then issue the certificates. That is the relationship

that exists between London and Cameroon which will be continued by the GCE Board.

The way the text creating the Board is prepared liberates us from liabilities. We are not supposed to inherit any of the debts of the Ministry of National Education owed the international bodies. There is no way the Board will succeed without maintaining excellent ties with the University of London Board. We know what it is worth and what it means to us. If we tell the University of London that we can't take care of their debts, the authorities of the London Board may say "well, you (Cameroon GCE Board authorities) have created system which will deprive us of the possibility of getting our money from the Ministry of Education. Sorry, there is no way we can deal with you unless we recover all debts owed us."

And if such a situation arises, the Board will encounter a lot of problems internalising its certificates. Therefore, it is our greatest responsibility to mount pressure on the Ministry of National Education to pay the debt owed the University of London Board in order to enhance a good relationship with London. It is for such a reason that we can't entirely dissociate ourselves from the debt. Somehow, we remain tied to that debt even if it would not be the GCE Board to pay the debt. That is the approach we intend to take in order to cement out links with the University of London Board.

Once the debt situation has been cleared, the GCE Board will work out its own new financial relationship with London. The Board will then be dealing directly with London. The financial deals may turn out to be handled much simpler than when it was still the Ministry dealing with London. I intend to travel to London and hold substantive discussions on strictly fresh financial relationship with the authorities at the University of London. Probably, my discussion with them may even lead to London University authorities allowing some of our Universities like the University of Buea to play some of the roles they have been playing.

C.L.: How will the marking of the 1994 GCE examinations be conducted by the Board? In other words, what criteria will be used to select the markers, the marking centres, and how will the payment of markers be done?

A.A.W.: The organising of this year's marking of the GCE will completely be different from what the Ministry of National Education used to do. There are going to be very significant changes. Before, there was a lot of money since the examination was handled under the auspices of the Ministry. The Ministry usually spent something like 3 billion FCFA on the GCE exams. Almost every teacher came to mark the GCE, and there were always about 500 to 1000 secretariat staff. That can hardly happen again since we consider it a luxury which the board cannot afford. But it does not mean that the Board will turn round immediately and throw off GCE, markers the Board intends to gradually reduce the number of markers. As from this year, each teacher interested in marking the GCE will have to apply and pay an application fee of FCFA 1000. If the application is granted and/accepted, that automatically means that the applicant is qualified to mark the GCE examination. Before marking begins, each marker will be given the time within which to get through with a given number of scripts. By the time the marking is over, the Board examines the budget and initiates payment of the sport. Markers (examiners) should understand that the marking allowance will be fluctuating every year. The year that there will be a remarkable increase in terms of public donation, government subvention, and examination entry fees, the markers should be sure of reaping more and otherwise. The marking allowance may either increase or reduce depending of what budget is available each year.

C.L.: When you talk about gradually reducing the number of GCE markers, don't you think the marking exercise may consequently be delayed?

A.A.W.: No! There are certain things which have happened in the past which the public is not aware of. With the system that government adopted, marker would mark the examination and he is paid a fixed amount depending on the number of scripts the marker corrected. In addition, the marker is also paid an out station allowance depending of the number of days spent at the marking centre. There was therefore, the possibility that a marker could mark 5 scripts in 10 days. But under normal marking conditions it should be done in 5 days. The Board will want the marking exercise to take the normal time. In the post, markers have not been putting in enough. Even though the Board won't lay emphasis on out-of-station allowances, it will still pay depending on what budget is available. The marking centres for 1994 are Buea and Bamenda for advanced and Ordinary Levels respectively. It is worth noting that all teachers whether government or private, have equal chances to be selected for the marking exercise. Competence is what the Board is out for.

C.L.: The ministry of National Education owes markers some arrears. How does the Board intend to handle this precarious debt situation?

A.A.W.: as I earlier told you, the Board won't inherit any debts owed teachers or other bodies by its predecessor. The Teachers' Association of Cameroon, TAC, is definitely going to handle that. The teachers (markers) will have to rally behind TAC as usual to get their money from government (MINEDUC).

C.L.: Today, markers complain that neither the Secretary of State, Yungha Teghen, nor the president of TAC, Azong Wara have made any statement as the what became the cheque that was promised them last year at the end of the marking exercise in Yaoundé. Can you clarify the situation?

A.A.W.: Well, there were a lot of gymnastics, lie - telling and

unfulfilled promises on the part of government. In spite of all that, after the marking exercise in Yaoundé, FCFA 200 million was made available by the Ministry for payment of out-of-station allowances and marking dues for last year. The money is presently being paid to markers in the Ministry of National Education (MINEDUC). GCE markers have been sending in their out-of-station files for compilation. Whether there was any money or cheque promised by the Secretary of state or not, that is completely out of question. What should be made clear is that MINEDUC has provided FCFA 2000, although it was discovered that the amount was inadequate. I was in Yaoundé recently, and got assurance that FCFA 70 million has been added, bringing the amount to FCFA 270 million to be paid to the GCE 93 markers.

If government says the FCFA 270 million is linked to that cheque, we will have no question to ask. But if MINEDUC says the cheque is still pending, we will mount pressure for them to be paid.

C.L.: Your final word?

A.A.W.: I will like to assure the public that we are doing everything possible at the Board to ensure its survival. With everything being equal, we promise that come July 4, 1994, they will start reaping the fruits of what they so much laboured for. We launched an appeal to the general public to co-operate with the Board particularly the Endowment Fund campaign team, and chip in their own window's mite to enable the Board take off in a sound financial footing.

And so on that note of optimism, let's end this chapter of the on-going Anglophone struggle for freedom, social justice and equality in Cameroon. May God grant us the courage to continue with the fight.

Chapter Nine

The Problem

Andrew Azong Wara

While the teachers' strike was raging and paralyzing national life, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Simon Achidi Achu, in a desperate move to stem the tide, created a committee by Order No. 194/CAB/PM of 11th September 1992. It was a thirteen man committee whose mission was spelt out simply as "to reflect on the creation of a General Certificate of Education Examination Board".

This was the year of the first multi-party elections in Cameroon and an Anglophone, Chairman Ni John Fru Ndi of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), was putting up a strong challenge to Paul Biya's leadership of the nation. The Sondengam committee as it was more popularly called because it was placed under the leadership of a charismatic, assiduous but easy-going university don. Professor Sondengam Baibam Luc, tucked itself away in the cool confines of Mont Cameroun and Room 412 in the Five-star Hilton Hotel in Yaoundé. Away from the hullabalos of the strike but in full view of the goings-on in the streets from the open windows of Mont Cameroun in the tenth floor of Hilton, aware of the political windfalls that the strike and subsequently the findings of our committee would have on those scrambling for the Etoudi Palace in the Presidential elections that were due in the November of 1992, the committee set for itself an initial timetable of 14 days for their work.

Regrettably the work was to drag on well into November 20, 1992 a few weeks after the elections and thus did not benefit from the momentum of the elections. Rather the momentum that the teachers' strike had generated and that had been put on hold when the committee was put to work had been lost. A decree to create the GCE Board was later signed on the 1st July 1993 but not until the Government had heard the rumblings of a second national strike.

However, the work of the committee turned out to be very useful as it digested and analyzed the problems plaguing

the examinations systems of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. From a historical perspective it was evident that the problems confronting the organization of the GCE had their roots in the thirty year history of the administration of examinations from 1962 - 1992. The plebiscite vote against integration with Nigeria in 1961 opened the way for West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to be reluctant to allow schools in West Cameroon to continue to write their examinations. The situation was further compounded by the fact that the Board of Education had in 1955 severed relations with the University of Cambridge Schools Examinations Board (CANTAB) and a return to them was therefore difficult. In the end the West Cameroon Board of Education adopted the London GCE.

The West Cameroon White Paper of 1963 had given some guidelines on aspects for the harmonization of school syllabuses between the Anglophone and Francophone school systems. In choosing the London GCE it was expected that a National Examination would soon evolve to replace the GCE and the Baccalauréat (BAC) that was in place in the Francophone school system. That the London GCE which was considered a temporary measure, as was clear from Principal's Conferences and political pronouncements at the time, was still in place by 1992 was seen to be the result of the total failure of meaningful efforts to replace it.

The Sondengam committee puts the blame for this failure on policy makers who could not adopt the harmonization of the two systems as a logical tool for educational reform and development in a Federal Bi-Cultural state as Cameroon. It is worth noting that the Government Bilingual School GBS Man-of-War Bay, (now Molyko) was created in the spirit of the Federal Education Law of 1963 which laid down the legal framework for harmonizing the two school systems. A harmonization Commission was established in 1965 to prepare school syllabuses in application of the law of 1963. By 1971 all syllabuses had been harmonized but no effort had been deployed to put them into effect.

In reviewing the attempts at harmonization the committee observed:

"Other than this commission and the GBS, no tangible

proof exists, therefore, to show that this effort at genuine harmonization was popular with certain authorities with influence within the Federal Government circles. On the contrary, failure to implement the harmonized reforms lends credence to the widely held belief at the time, that pressure was brought on government to replace the harmonization policy with that of assimilation. The death of the two institutions, Institute de Pédagogie à Vocation Rurale (IPAR) and Institute National d'Éducation (INE) whose future depended, to a large extent, on the implementation of the harmonized programme, is added proof".

All attempts by successive Ministers of Education to initiate harmonization reforms were shrouded in suspicion. They lacked the initial professional groundwork as they took the form of directives. There was never any mention of or reference to the earlier harmonization exercise which had been carried out with the assistance of UNESCO.

In 1969 government issued a decree cameroonizing the BAC, a step which was seen as a triumph for the education system. Unfortunately the decree failed to make reference to the GCE O/Level as a qualifying examination for the BAC. The result was that Anglophone students holding the GCE O/Level could only write the BAC if they went back to write the BEPC and the Probatoire which were Francophone exams set at the level of the GCE O/Level. On the contrary a similar decree of 1976 for the Cameroon GCE stipulated among others that the BEPC and the Probatoire are qualifying examinations for the GCE A/Level. The absence of a corresponding clause in the 1969 decree makes it suspect in the Anglophone eyes.

The committee summarized this situation in the following words:

".... The chance to produce a national examination board was missed and the policy maker seemed to have been more concerned with replacing the Anglophone examinations with those of the Francophone system, than seeking to see how the strengths of the two systems could be pulled together for the progress of national technical education."

The situation with Technical Education Examinations was pathetic. At the time of the introduction of the cameroonized BAC examination there was only one technical college in Anglophone Cameroon, Ombe Technical College. The college was hitherto presenting candidates for the City and Guilds Certificate examinations. CAP was introduced and teachers of the institution were initially invited to contribute questions for the CAP examinations. Gradually, questions were set in French and translated into English and this led to the imposition of the CAP programme on Anglophone candidates. Anglophones were at the same time totally excluded from technical education institutions for the training of teachers. The result was that for a very long period no Anglophone teachers were recruited into key technical fields.

The unavailability of syllabuses for CAP in English was a further stumbling block. For so many years therefore Anglophone children were writing examinations for which there were no published syllabuses. Furthermore they were taught for the most part by Francophone teachers who, at best, resorted to the use of Pidgin English to put across their ideas.

It is this situation with technical education more than anything else that was the driving force behind the teachers' revolt. The Anglophone public saw what had happened to technical education as a bad omen. They suspected that it would eventually happen to the GCE. They saw that if the trend were allowed to continue the existing GCE system would crumble and the Anglophones would be obliged to adopt the practice within the Francophone system.

The state of the Teachers Certificate Examination was pitiable. The training of primary school teachers in West Cameroon was far more advanced than that in East Cameroon before the advent of the Unitary State in 1972. But in 1978 the Ministry of Education introduced uniform primary Teachers Training programmes in all institutions in Cameroon. This was done without proper consultation and studies and the innovation drastically watered down the quality of primary school Teacher Training. The Catholic Education Authorities considered these reforms to be very scandalous and refused to adopt them. Of course the mediocre quality of teachers

produced from these schools reflected the institutional bias inherent in the decree itself.

At the dawn of the institution of the United Republic of Cameroon and the creation of the Provincial Delegations of Education the organization of examinations in the two Anglophone Provinces passed from the West Cameroon Education Board to the Provincial Delegate for the South West Province. This was to last only until the creation of the post of Deputy Director of Examinations in the Ministry of National Education in 1974. The GCE was transferred from Buea to Yaoundé. To give a concrete expression of government concern for the poor and its commitment to the policy of free education GCE fees were cut from FCFA 17,000 per candidate to FCFA 3,500, a decision that was taken with total institutional insensitivity. No attention was paid to the peculiarities of the GCE examination. While this move eased the financial burdens of parents it was certain to shroud the system with inefficiencies and when they became overwhelming parents quickly forgot about the financial gains and rose like one man to challenge the status quo.

It can be said without equivocation that the anger of the Anglophone population which came to a head in 1992 was caused by the handling of the GCE that year. However, anger had been building up fuelled by the various earlier attempts at reforming the GCE. The decree of 1976 creating the Cameroon GCE was a result of very careful arrangements between the Cameroon Ministry of Education and the University of London, arrangements which facilitated the transfer of expertise in the conduct of the examination to trained Anglophone examiners.

Two attempts were made to reform the GCE which were seen as consonant with the detested policy of assimilation of the Anglophone system of education. The first was in 1983 which tried to change the structure of the GCE from a single subject to a group certificate and the second was in 1985. It took a violent reaction from the Anglophone population to kill these reforms. While these attempts at reforming the GCE were being tried out there was no visible attempt at any reform of the Francophone examinations system. They were therefore seen as irrefutable evidence that the government was actively pursuing a policy of assimilation.

Since the domain of education, like the domain of politics, falls within the competence of every individual citizen, it is therefore essentially a conflict generating domain. The Sondengam committee analyzed the factors surrounding the conflicts that arose in the course of reforming the Anglophone educational system and found them to be directly caused by problems resulting from:

- a) a widespread public perception of general incompetence leading to failure-linked policies,
- b) political interference leading to arbitrariness in an area requiring logical and rational policy making,
- c) institutional and cultural bias,
- d) structural and organizational incapacities,
- e) bureaucratic indifference, arrogance and routine, resulting in a break down of systems, standards and quality,
- f) the absence of planning and evaluative mechanism, resulting in haemorrhaging, under-funding and resource misuse,
- g) a break-down of the necessary institutions indispensable for public based support and consensus building,
- h) an absence of a purposeful policy of manpower training, planning and assessment needs for efficiently running the examination system,
- i) inflexibility and hostility towards structural simplification and modular planning.

It is important to note that there was structural or organizational stagnation in the Department of Examinations from 1976 when the Cameroon GCE was created to 1992 when the teachers' strike was organized as a result of the financial and organizational problems that marred the conduct of the GCE in that year.

When the government created the Anglo-Saxon type University of Buea and the Francophone type University of Ngaoundéré Cameroonians woke up to the realization that government had finally recognized that the best guarantee to national order, stability and progress lay in the survival of the nation's bicultural character. Institutional building of this nature is confirmed by International Specialized Agencies as the World

Bank and UNESCO as providing more political stability. It is indispensable for ultimate and sustainable development. In the educational sector, these agencies have stressed the need for a "renewed commitment to academic standards, principally through strengthening examinations systems", (*UNESCO World Education Report 1991* p. 93). Yet the importance of the examination system to the entire education sector has often been ignored. According to UNESCO:

"The restoration and clarification of standards of academic performance are key to improving the quality of education at all levels. Academic expectations for students and schools should be high, and they should be clear. By providing signals on performance to which teachers, students and parents can respond, the examination system is both a measurement and an incentive device that should be used explicitly to raise academic standards. But to perform this function, most African examination systems need to broaden their tests to sample the full range of cognitive competencies sought by the nation from a given level of the education system." (*UNESCO World Education Report, 1991, p. 97*)

UNESCO thus clearly establishes a direct link between the state of quality and standards in a given Educational System and the examination system. The examination system thus becomes a critical factor in confidence building, teaching, learning and achievement motivation.

The Sondengam Committee concluded that the problems which have plagued examinations as a result of handling at the level of the Ministry in charge of Education in Cameroon which have engendered the popular out cry about falling standards are indeed related to the state of the examination system itself. It states emphatically that the thirty years of mistrust, confidence damaging and declining standards could have been avoided if there had been an examinations board.

The Mission of the GCE Board

Presidential decrees in Cameroon tend to be very brief and ambivalent. Their real scope is usually defined in a document called the text of application. In general this text emanates from

the office of the Prime Minister and Head of Government and is based on the recommendations made by a study committee set up under the auspices of the titular Minister. The interpretation and implementation of the decree depends on both the Manager and Supervisory Minister of the Institution (in the case where the decree creates an institution as the GCE Board). If the Manager and Supervisory Authority work in the same frame of reference the interpretation and application can be very smooth indeed. It is important to stress this point because, as we show below, the differences of the points of view of the Registrar and of the Minister in charge of Education were to generate so much conflict and friction that the Board nearly would not have taken off in the first place.

After the long and exhaustive work of the Sondengam Committee, which work included a draft of the Presidential decree, and only when it became obvious that further foot dragging towards the creation of the GCE Board would usher in a more devastating strike, the Head of State signed a one page decree creating the GCE Board. This decree states in the third of its six short articles that the GCE Board is charged with the organization of examinations of the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary and Advanced Levels). In its introductory statement it made no reference to the decree of 1976 creating the cameroonized GCE. This was an important omission which could be exploited in either of two ways. The decree of 1976 spelt out all the subjects that fell under the purview of the GCE both at O/Level and A/Level. These subjects did not include any Technical Education subjects nor did it include Religious Studies. The presidential decree could be seen to be referring exclusively to the subjects contained in that decree. The Minister of Education who saw Technical Education as a reserve of the Francophone sub system turned to the 1976 decree as representing the basis for the Presidential decree of 1993.

On the other hand one could regard the omission as meaning that even the President had seen the 1976 decree as obsolete and that the GCE Board could be free to enlarge the scope of the GCE subjects under its purview. This latter view was buttressed by the fact that the Sondengam Committee had earlier strongly recommended that the following Technical Education subjects which were already examined in the GCE

Ordinary and Advanced level by the London University be introduced into the Cameroon GCE Examinations: Computing Studies, Design and Technology, Electronics, Engineering Science, Graphical Communication, Pure Mathematics and Theoretical Mechanics, Business Studies, etc. Incidentally such a development was already envisaged by order No. 3/C43/MINEDUC/DEXC of 12 January 1976.

As Pioneer Registrar of the GCE Board I took this second view because it would eventually allow the Board to bring all the examinations of Technical Education in the Anglophone sub system under the purview of the GCE Board. For just the opposite reasons the Minister of Education took the first view. It will allow him to continue to stifle the Anglophone system of Technical Education and so permit the government to perpetuate its policy of assimilation of Anglophones and keep them out of the field of Technical Education which was more industry related. Naturally this was to be the source of conflict between the Registrar and the Titular Minister throughout the founding years of the GCE Board.

To return to the text of application and in all fairness to those who helped construct it, including the third chairman of the GCE Board Dr. Peter Abetty, who played a frontline role in thwarting the efforts of malevolents in the administration to frustrate Anglophone ambitions on 12th October 1993, it enlarged the scope of the GCE Board to permit it to:

- a) organize examinations for the award of certificates and other distinctions to persons who qualify;
- b) offer technical advice on the design of learning programmes for secondary educational institutions;
- c) collaborate with other organizations and institutions responsible for similar examinations in Cameroon and elsewhere;
- d) conduct and contract research and studies on examinations and other aspects of education;
- e) demand and receive from any candidates sitting examinations such fees as shall from time to time be determined by the Board and approved by the Minister in charge of National Education;
- f) enter into contracts, borrow, establish trusts, act as trustees solely or jointly with any other persons and

- employ and act through agents in accordance with regulations in force;
- g) accept gifts, legacies and donations but without obligation to accept same for a particular purpose unless it approves the terms and conditions attached thereto;
 - h) undertake publishing and book-selling as approved by the Minister of National Education.

It is also important to be reminded of the fact that the Sondengam Committee had in many of its recommendations to government proposed:

- i) That an Examinations Board be created for the French-speaking School System one year after the GCE Board had gone into full operation. The government waited only a little over two months to create a BAC Board in September 1993 even when it was clear that the Francophones had not asked for one.
- ii) That syllabuses at all levels and in all subjects be immediately published in such form as to ensure that they are easily available to all schools and candidates. That all technical education subjects examined by the London GCE be introduced in the Cameroon GCE as intended in the Ministerial Order No. 3/C43/MINEDUC/DEXC of 12 January 1976.
- iii) That the Ministry of National Education exerts greater effort than it has done so far in defining national educational goals and achievement criteria in all subjects at various levels of the school system.
- iv) That Cameroon's dual system of education be helped to develop its distinctive characteristics as this is the basis for enormous national cultural riches. That in this respect, holders of the GCE Ordinary Level should be allowed to take the Probatoire and the BAC just as holders of these certificates have been permitted by the order cited above to take the GCE.
- v) That the Ministry of National Education should honour its financial obligations to London University so that the Board may easily establish good relations with this institution.

- vi) That given the present economic crisis Government should envisage arranging a loan of between 8 and 10 million Dollars from multi-lateral or bi-lateral sources to cover the cost of the investment necessary for the immediate take-off of the Cameroon GCE Board.

Implementation Programme

As soon as I got news of my appointment as Pioneer Registrar on 26th November 1993 I immediately set for myself a few goals in the form of a road map towards implementation of the ideals and objectives defined for me by the relevant texts creating the GCE Board. My first concern was to put in place an effective take-off programme and to prepare the first examination of the Board which was due in six months, i.e. in May 1994. I had three years according to the text of application to get the Board become fully operational before my next term of office, if I would still be interested.

In the beginning my Chairman Mr. S. N. Dioh, who I had personally recommended for the job through the advice of the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) showed a lot of understanding. Before I got to Buea two weeks after my appointment he had taken the initiative to procure temporary accommodation at IPAR Buea, to employ three first staff of the Board and to acquire a post-box (PMB 10000). He had also initiated contracts with a printing house (PRESPRINT Limbe) for eventual printing of examination material which I later concretized as CEO.

A first Council meeting held shortly after I took office on 10th December 1993, to set up a programme of work. More specifically it adopted a strategy to enable it to meet with the various deadlines on the Implementation Plan that I presented to it and worked out guidelines for collaboration with MINEDUC during the period of my tenure of office which we considered as the transition period. It made recommendations for the appointment of the other officers of the Board such as the Deputy Registrars, the Examinations Officers and the other such personnel. Finally it studied and adopted a take-off budget that I had presented to it.

The most pressing task at hand was the organization of the GCE examination for 1994. The Director of IPAR Dr.

Abangma Mathias gave us unlimited access to the meagre facilities he had including even his own office and telephone services. I remain grateful to him. We hired one computer from the Teachers Association of Cameroon and summoned Chief Examiners who quietly took turns on it to prepare and type questions for use in the examination in case the Minister turned up with a sabotage plan. He eventually did by ordering the Department of Examinations not to hand over any examination material to the GCE Board which included questions that had been prepared and moderated for the 1994 exams.

Soon after, the facilities at IPAR were becoming terribly inadequate. We therefore proceeded to hire two more spacious buildings from individuals at the present site while the Ministry of Housing gave us a government building behind the Governor's official residence which we converted into a warehouse. Next we bought a plot with a partly complete building which lies between Franco Alliance Cameroon buildings and SNEC (Water Corporation) offices in Buea. To prepare grounds for the building of more permanent structures for the Board, we applied for land from the Senior Divisional Officer for Fako, drew out building plans for such offices and together with the Chairman of the GCE Board, his eventual successor the late Dr. Herbert Endeley, and a number of Councillors presented same to H.E. the Prime Minister of the Republic for study and eventual realization. Finally we hired two buildings, one from the Azire Cooperative Credit Union League in Bamenda and the other in the former FONADER building in Yaoundé to house two Regional Offices of the Board.

The next task was the equipment of these offices. This involved the purchase of equipment such as machines, tables, chairs, cupboards, etc, for all the offices in Buea, Bamenda and Yaoundé. With the conduct of the first GCE over we then proceeded to purchase and install computer equipment and a fully automated medium sized Printing Press. Having failed to get the Ministry to transfer Archives, Question Bank and other Examination Material from the Department of Examinations in MINEDUC to the Board, we put in place the humble beginnings of these structures ourselves.

Of all the initial staff that we had at the Board including all of the seconded personnel there was no computer

programmer. At best we had one or two computer operators and a few typists. The programmes we needed for the running of the institution had either to be bought directly from software companies or to be designed for us by goodwill Anglophone computer experts. In this respect we benefited from the assistance of some devout Anglophone computer specialists who readily prepared programmes for us at a small fee. Our staff was then trained on the operation of these programmes on the job. It must be said that most of them including the seconded personnel were good learners pushed by the simple determination to see the Board succeed. They learnt so fast that within the second year of the operation of the Board they were able to use their expertise to train some officials of the BAC Board for two weeks in Buea.

Our attention was finally turned to the structure of the examination itself. The difficulties we had with Technical Education notwithstanding I was particularly concerned with the structure of the regular subjects of the GCE as we know them. It has been said unequivocally that between 1976 and 1992 syllabuses had stagnated and consequently the structure of the examinations had remained virtually unchanged during this period. I was particularly disturbed by the situation in History where Cameroonian children were being taught the histories of the western world at the expense of their own Cameroonian history. I therefore got the teachers to restructure the subject so that Cameroon History should take prominence, African History should follow suit and the rest of the World History should be grouped into one history paper. The fallouts from these structural reforms to Cameroonian Historians are there for them to attest to. Such structural reforms were carried out in all subjects where the need was obvious. In addition the inclusion of subjects like Philosophy and Religious Studies in the GCE was a welcome relieve to students, parents and religious institutions as well. Statistics available at the GCE Board for June 2007 show that these subjects occupy the 4th and 6th positions in terms of popularity with students at the A/Level.

Relations with MINEDUC

By the early 90's multi-lateral and bi-lateral financing bodies had adopted privatization as the ultimate objective for the 21st

century development and integration of the different economies of the world. A war was being waged against governments as bureaucratic structures whose power consists in leading everything to and from the centre. Governments were not ready to see wholesale transfer of all or some of their power to private management. Instead they devised strategies which would enable them to hang on to their power while at the same time rivalling the private sector in efficiency and output. One such strategy is decentralization of specialized units so as to ensure greater participation, and consensus as well as permit the government to share costs without raising taxes in the liberal environment in which user support is critically important.

Within the examination context the creation of an Examinations Board was seen as a structural reform which would involve a kind of moderate decentralization in which authority would be turned over to an intermediate structure of apparent shared ownership but which, in essence is still firmly attached to the parent power whose only motive for disengaging it from itself is not to share power but to share costs and to ensure efficiency and acceptability.

Viewed from this perspective the creation of the GCE Board ought to have been a very welcomed innovation in our educational system both to government and the ordinary people of Cameroon. In this light the Ministry of Education would shed what it was ill-equipped to handle in the first place and turn its attention to control and supervision, general policy planning and implementation, curriculum development and pedagogic supervision, infrastructural development and resource allocation, establishing and maintaining standards and quality, staff recruitment, training and promotion , creation of public schools, addressing disparities in educational opportunities, and so on and so forth.

In return for this structural reform, and in addition to the greater efficiency to be achieved at the centre, numerous other gains would accrue notably a stable institutional tool with an expandable capacity for measuring all forms of educational achievement and a wider range of assessment instruments.

Clearly therefore the creation of the GCE Board was without doubt a well-intentioned project. It was in line with the government's policy of decentralization and fell in step with the

conclusion of UNESCO's 1991 World Education Report which held that:

"Within the African context, however, there are good reasons for believing that education systems could be made more efficient if certain functions and responsibilities were devolved away from the central Ministries of Education and Man-power Development. The arguments in favour of greater decentralization have to do with the characteristics of most African countries: greater ethnic and linguistic diversity, and relatively poorly developed systems of communications".

Unfortunately Cameroon's number one proponent of the policy of the assimilation of the Anglophone culture and its peoples, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, down whose throat the Board had been forced, could not accept defeat. He put in place one scheme after the other to frustrate the Board, make it fail and then return control of it to the central services of his Ministry. This was carried out through refusal to hand over valuable examination archives to the Board, blackmail of Board officials through cronies in the administration and paid agents amongst the teachers, starving the Board of necessary finances and attempts to block the Board from conducting examinations in Technical Education.

Before the creation of the Board it had been envisaged that it would require a take-off state subvention of FCFA 3,609,950,000. Secondly it had been established that the Examinations Department owed local GCE Administration FCFA 3,624,890,542. The burden of paying this debt and other debts of the University of London were to remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The Minister did not comply with these recommendations. Instead he passed the responsibility for all of the above to the GCE Board. He made no provision for the take-off. In fact it was not until the first examination had been conducted, much to his chagrin, and the marking was being held up, that he sent four Treasury Vouchers worth about FCFA 161,000,000 to the Board. One of them of the worth of about FCFA 75,000,000 was intended for payment of part of the debt of the Ministry of Education to University of London. The implication was that the debt of London was now

the responsibility of the Board. I declined this responsibility and returned the voucher to MINEDUC. Effectively therefore the GCE Board got state subvention of about FCFA 97,000,000 in its first year of operation representing only about 2.7per cent of what the Sondengam Committee had recommended. Over the following two years, as though angered by the fact that we had succeeded to organize the examinations after all, the Ministry sent a total of about FCFA 85,000,000 as state subvention.

The instances of blackmail were numerous. They range from utterances made by teachers who hitherto were strongly committed to the institution of the Board; to bitterness openly expressed by Higher ENS Teachers who felt that they were by right supposed to have been at the helm of the Board rather than in the classroom; to attempts to stir discontent at marking centres to destabilize the marking. After the GCE leakage of 1996 the Minister was seen to be openly sympathetic with the forces that were clearly suspected to have been involved in an effort to bring shame to the Board.

The conflict between the Board and the Titular authority reached the head when the Board conducted its first GCE in Technical Education. The decision to conduct these examinations had been taken by Council and the Minister had been duly informed. By the provisions of Article 4(c) of the text of application he had to stop the Board from organizing these examinations if he so desired in under 15 days. His silence after that time would be taken as consent. Fortunately for the Board he only realized that he had been caught napping on the eve of the conduct of the said examination.

Relations with Local Administrative Authorities.

It will be recalled that the early 90's were years of political turbulence in Cameroon. Anyone who held contrary views to those of government, whether the point was as innocent as the GCE, was branded a member of the opposition. This was the time of the infamous "come-no-go" philosophy being propagated by the over-zealous Governor of the South West Province at the time. As the GCE Board was forced down the throat of the government and since I belonged to the group of people described as "come-no-go" I was bound to have it rough. Even local education authorities were encouraged to be hostile

to the Board. The result was that when the first Technical GCE was conducted very few children from the South West Province were allowed to attempt them. The few children from the Government Technical College Ombe who we registered for the examinations were not allowed to leave the campus to go out to write the examination. I remember how we used to send people into the campus to ferry the children out in the boots of cars to get them to the examination centres. There were nasty attempts to torpedo the mission of the Board being carried out by its enemies, some of these with the complicity of some of my close collaborators.

Relations with Teachers

They were very healthy indeed. The fact that I stayed on as the President of the Teachers Association of Cameroon was of enormous help to me. The sacrifices that these colleagues made to see the Board stand on its feet can never be discounted. I can never forget them. A few years after I left the Board one teacher walked up to me and said: "You were good but your friends pushed you too hard. Look your successor has brought us money which you could not bring to us". This statement alone revealed the hidden side of some of the colleagues with whom I worked. I have no ill-feelings towards them because, in all fairness they deserved to be compensated for their input. However, I sympathize with colleagues of this school of thought who never understood nor appreciated the difficulties under which I worked.

Relations with the Press

These relations were very fluid. In the first place it will be remembered that most of the press organs in this country worked along with me during the struggle for the creation of the GCE Board. When the struggle eventually ended most of them acclaimed my leadership and proposed awards for me. I have only one regrettable experience: one of the press organs that were at the forefront of the struggle did not quite understand what it was all about. When the Board was ready to publish the results of its first examinations all the press organs were at the Board's office waiting to receive copies except this particular press organ which went instead to the Department of

Examinations in MINEDUC expecting to grab a copy from there. This press organ did not realize that it had helped fight for an independent institution. It therefore missed out on the opportunity to publish the first results of examinations conducted by an independent institution which it had helped to create. Thereafter its pages were awash with scandalous and acrimonious stories about the same person it had almost deified only a few months earlier.

Relations with the Chairman and the Council of the GCE Board

I have stated under the Implementation Programme that relations between the Chairman and in fact with the Council were initially excellent. Throughout my tenure of office relations with the Council remained very good and helpful. The GCE Board was a new institution in the system of Education in Cameroon. It needed the guidance and expertise of everyone involved for it to build on solid rock. The Council was made up of men of sound educational experience all of who had been involved in one way or the other with the effort to create the institution. Their input was therefore very significant and was coming freely.

As time went on the Chairman began to confuse his role as the Chairperson of the Council of the Board with that of the Registrar, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Board. This was to become the source of many conflicts which caused the Council to spend most of its meeting time trying to resolve disputes between us. The final act which led to his replacement as Chairman came when, just before the organization of the GCE of 1996 he wrote to the Banks blocking the signature of the Registrar. This was viewed by the Council as a deliberate attempt to sabotage the conduct of the examinations for that year. The Council quickly convened, declared solidarity with the Registrar and forced him to write to the Banks withdrawing his earlier letter. When the Council reconvened to endorse the results of the GCE for that year, the late Dr. Herbert Endeley was the new Chairman of the GCE Board.

Relations with the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (ULEAC)

At the time of the creation of the GCE Board relations between

the Ministry of Education and the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council were at their lowest ebb. A few extracts from correspondence between the two institutions will help elucidate the point. In a letter dated 13 October 1993 and addressed to Dr. Mbella Mbappe, Minister of National Education, Dr. Adrian J. Woodthorpe, Deputy Chief Executive of ULEAC wrote:

You will be aware that under Section 5(ii) of that Heads of Agreement the University of London agreed to vet all subjects in the Cameroon GCE examinations at both Ordinary and Advanced level for an assessment of the comparability of the Cameroon grades with those of the London GCE examinations. The Heads of Agreement states that your Ministry was to provide London with the appropriate documentation (syllabuses, question papers, mark schemes, grade boundaries and selected scripts) for that exercise to be undertaken and that the future endorsement of Cameroon GCE Certificates (i.e. Summer 1991 and thereafter) was dependent upon the satisfactory completion of that vetting exercise. My letters dated 17 September 1992 and 4 March 1993 drew to the attention of your Ministry the fact that the necessary documentation had not been received by us and that continued endorsement of Cameroon GCE Certificates by the University could not be given unless the comparability exercise had been completed. It is the case that, as detailed in my letter of 17 September 1992, your Ministry and the University of London had, up until August 1992, and with the invaluable assistance of the British Council, succeeded in achieving the objectives as stated in the Heads of Agreement. Regrettably no further progress has been achieved since August 1992 and the University is now obliged to consider the implications of that lack of progress for the future.

You will appreciate that the University must take every action necessary to ensure that its name is not brought into disrepute. To that end the University of London must be able to provide assurances to any third party that a formal endorsement of a qualification by the University is based upon empirical evidence of the sort

that would be generated by the proposed comparability exercise between the London and Cameroon GCE. It is with great regret therefore, that I am writing to inform you that I must recommend to our Governing Council that, since we have been unable to complete the agreed comparability exercise, the University of London must consider the need to withdraw its endorsement of any Cameroon GCE Certificates issued in or after 1991. Should the University resolve to take such action it will be necessary for London to notify Universities in the UK, the Commonwealth and elsewhere of its decision. That decision will be made also in the context of reports which I have received regarding major irregularities in the conduct of the June 1993 Cameroon GCE marking exercise which would appear further undermine London's ability to continue with its existing arrangements with your Ministry. Those reports include statements that Cameroon GCE scripts are to be marked by examiners untrained for the purpose, that there have been significant breaches of the normal security requirements necessary to ensure the integrity of the scripts and that it is proposed to award grades on the basis of information additional to that contained in the candidates' scripts."

Frightened of the social consequences of the lack of cooperation with London in this exercise Dr. Mbella Mbappe responded and on the 23 November 1993 Dr. Woodthorpe, encouraged also by the news that the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) had seized the marking centre at Ecole Normal and GBHS Essos and chased out the "ghost" markers, wrote to the Minister as follows:

"I was encouraged by your letter since it is the sincere wish of my Council to maintain the harmonious and co-operative relationship with your Ministry that we have enjoyed for so many years. I was pleased to hear news of the GCE Board from you and can confirm our willingness to assist with its work in as far as we are able and you would wish. As a consequence of the assurances contained in your letter, I will recommend that my

Governing Council defers making a decision on future action with regard to the Cameroon GCE until its meeting in January 1994 at which time I hope to be able to report the positive and tangible action taken by your Ministry as outlined."

As was to be expected no tangible action was taken by the Ministry. Instead the Minister passed the responsibility over to the Board without making provision for the Heads of Agreement. There was no proposal for the rescheduling of the debt repayments set out in the Heads of Agreement as had been requested by London. Even the minimum amount of £150,000 that had been agreed under Section 6 of the Heads of Agreement for the 1992 instalment, representing a slippage of one year, was not paid. The rescheduling of agreement and the further discussion of continuing co-operation between the University of London and Cameroon were subject to the receipt from the Minister of the payment for the 1993 comparability exercise, the payment of the 1992 debt instalment and the outcome of the 1993 study.

When the Board was created Mbella Mbappe virtually abrogated these agreements. I therefore travelled to London to discuss the matter with Dr. Adrian Woodthorpe. While the University of London was bent on pursuing the Ministry of Education in respect of its debt payment it was however inclined to giving the GCE Board all the support it needed to take off until the University of Buea, the new academic authority over the GCE Board, was fully prepared to assume its responsibilities.

Relations with Cambridge

It is to be recalled that the West Cameroon Education Board had severed relations with the University of Cambridge Schools Examinations Board (CANTAB) in 1955. When the GCE Board organized the first examination in Technical Education, and faced with the threat of non recognition by MINEDUC, we saw the holders of these certificates ending up in frustration. University of London to which we could turn was not offering all the subjects we had examined and so had no way of vetting the exercise. Our only hope of giving international backing to these certificates was to turn to a foreign Board which could vet

the examination for the Board. Out of the blues John Sadler, the Director of the Department of Foreign Examinations at Cambridge wrote to me offering the assistance of the University. I invited him over to Cameroon and we talked. I later returned the visit to Cambridge and the upshot of our discussion was a vetting of the Technical GCE for that year and an offer to take over the role of the University of London if the Board so desired. To be consonant with the practice at Cambridge we had to adopt certain norms and terminologies used by this Examination Board. This was the reason for the incorporation of the term 'Assessor' in the Cameroon GCE instead of the term 'Moderator' that was previously in use.

Relations with the University of Buea

While the rest of the Cameroonian society was divided as to the way forward for the GCE Board the Board and the University of Buea were forging a healthy and meaningful academic relationship. Dr. Mrs. Dorothy L. Njeuma, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Buea realized that she had to guide the Board in the pursuit of its mission firstly because her institution was the academic authority over the GCE Board and secondly because it was from the pool of candidates produced by the GCE Board that UB was to draw students for its own institution. The proper conduct of the examinations was her primary concern and so she detached herself from the bunch of detractors to give me constant guidance through regular meetings with me and my senior personnel. She encouraged me to draw examiners from the staff of the University of Buea and to train and prepare them for eventual roles as Assessors so that the job of the University to vet the examinations could be facilitated.

Relations with other Institutions

The Board also established very fruitful cooperation ties with other institutions of examinations such as the College of Preceptors which was organizing through the Provincial Delegations of Education, courses and examinations for the award of teachers' professional certificates such as ACP, LCP and FCP. Through the visit of officials of this College to Cameroon and my subsequent visit to their institute in London we reached agreement to bring these examinations under the

purview of the Board. Similar relations were forged with institutes of examinations such as LCCI, City and Guilds, etc.

Relations with AEAA

Between 6th and 9th November 1995 I participated in an extended programme of events at the Houses of Parliament in London on the Management of Examinations and Assessment. During this conference I was introduced to the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) to which I immediately initiated the Cameroon GCE Board. The GCE Board has already had the opportunity of hosting the Annual Conference of this association in Cameroon and is looking forward to doing so again in the coming year.

Relations with the Staff of the GCE Board

On the morning of the day of the installation of the Pioneer Chairman of the GCE Board, Sammy Arrey-Mbi Bessong, the Secretary General of TAC, John Fodje Taiti, the Treasurer of TAC and I got up early and sat around our breakfast table in Mountain Hotel Buea to piece together the ideas we had spent the night musing over. They were to form the basis of a speech I would deliver at the installation ceremony on behalf of the Teachers Association of Cameroon as a conclusion of the struggle we had gone through and chart the way forward. When it was all done and typed Dr. Peter Abetty the third Chairmen of the Board came to inform us that the Minister of Education had requested to see a copy before it was read. He was gone for a while and when he returned he appealed to us to remove one particular paragraph which the Minister had considered to be irksome. He convinced us to put the past behind us and adopt a spirit of magnanimity.

It was this spirit of magnanimity and reconciliation that guided me when I set out to recruit the top staff of the GCE Board who included some of those who been at the sending and receiving ends of what London described as “significant breaches of the normal security requirements necessary to ensure the integrity of the scripts (for the 1993 GCE)”. Even when I had to recruit teachers for the marking of the GCE I gave favourable consideration to some of the ‘ghost’ markers of 1993

who I found were competent for the exercise. Whatever the initial positions of these staff, they gave me full collaboration working under difficult conditions without complaining. It was only towards the end of my term of office that the financial strain on them began to take its toll on their loyalty to me. It was therefore a relief to them when I left as a few of them quickly became agents of a blackmail campaign which the new administration launched against me.

The personnel I recruited directly gave the Board the best in them at the expense of their personal health and security. I am a happy man today to observe that their devotion to the course of the GCE Board and their endurance has been unparalleled.

The Issue of Certificates

I was conscious of the fact that any certificate examination had to end with the issue of proper certificates. I therefore reached an agreement with Stephen Austin and Co, in the UK, for the eventual printing of certificates. This agreement was concretized shortly after my term of office.

Anglophone Naivety

The GCE crisis in Cameroon and its eventual resolution through the creation of the GCE Board is indeed the true test of Anglophone solidarity. It is the one success story that Anglophones will tell for generations to come. However, two events occurred during this struggle that I need to talk about as they portray the typical naivety of the Anglophone public in Cameroon. It is often said that when the Lion and the Lamb opt to lie down together the lamb must always sleep with one eye open and must perpetually stay alert and be witty enough to exploit the lapses of the lion. It is a survival instinct akin to all animals.

When the Prime Minister's Committee of Reflection was put in place on 11th September 1992 presidential elections were due the following November. Everyone knows that was the time when any alert lamb in this country could have taken it out on the lion. We had the choice of producing the text of a decree in less than 14 days which the shrewd Prime Minister Achidi Achu gave us, and therefore creating a powerful institution well before the election. We could then stay on for a few more days and

prepare a text of application which would be signed by an Anglophone Prime Minister whose sympathies were clearly with the creation of the Board. All of these would have been achieved and the Board would probably have been in place well before the presidential elections in November. But we were naïve. We believed that government's intentions were genuine and opted to take time and do a thorough job. I have no doubt that the job was thorough and exhaustive and I do not question the integrity of the men and woman of our committee. The only fact is that our naivety caused us to lose the opportunity to turn the tide in the favour of the Anglophones. By the time we were ready to submit our report on 20th November 1992 the elections were over, President Biya had 'won' and Fru Ndi had been caged in Ntarikon. There was no urgency to address the issue. In fact our report was not received with any enthusiasm and we were left to find money from our peers to settle our hotel bills before we could leave Yaoundé. It had to take a second and more violent Teachers' and Parents' strike in 1993 before what we should have had in 1992 was achieved.

Secondly, in May 1995 a preparatory meeting towards the organization of the GCE held in the Ministry of National Education. It is a regular meeting which holds every year at this time to assess the level of preparedness for the end-of-course examinations that usually begin in June. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Mbella Mbappe the Minister of Education. It was the year when we were preparing to examine Technical GCE for the first time. At some point during the meeting the Minister handed over to the Secretary of State and excused himself to attend to nature's call. The Secretary of State seized the opportunity and called me to present my report out of turn suspecting that it will contain areas on Technical Education which the Minister would not like to hear. I rushed it through. He handed the floor to one of the Anglophone Provincial Delegates who took the cue and rushed his report through. The other Anglophone Provincial Delegate took the floor just when the Minister had resumed his seat. He was naïve. He had missed the cue we had given and proceeded to raise questions about the Board's right to conduct GCE in Technical Education subjects.

The Minister stopped him and ordered me back to the stand to take my report all over, warning as he did so that he did

want to hear any mention of Technical GCE in my report. Before I got up Shakespeare hit me on the right side of my brain: "To be or not to be, that is the question; whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them..." Franz Fanon hit me on the left side: "The future will have no pity for those who, possessing the exceptional qualities of being able to speak words of truth to their oppressors, have taken refuge in an attitude of passivity, of mute indifference, and sometimes of cold complicity". As I rose to respond Louis Aujoulat was creeping up my spine and whispering in my ears: "Be calm, be calm Mr. Azong Wara. This is Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society".

I picked the words one after the other and calmly: "Mr. Minister why do you think that Technical Education should be the exclusive reserve of Francophones in this country? What crime have Anglophones committed to be excluded from this domain of education?" There was absolute quiet. We looked at each other steadily for a long time. The Anglophone journalist from CRTC who was covering the occasion switched off his recording instruments. The Francophone Provincial Delegates of Education and Directors in the central administration looked on in absolute disbelief. The Secretary of State broke the silence by suggesting that the Minister and I should go up to his office and finish the matter between two of us. He took the cue and got up to walk out. I took the flight of stairs to the eighth floor where his office was located three at a time arriving at his office almost at the same time even as he came up through the lift. It is sufficient to say that what transpired in that office laid the foundation, first for an order which he later signed instructing the Principals of schools to accept candidates with certificates in GCE Technical and, second the eventual amendment of the GCE texts authorizing the Board as well to organize the Baccalauréat and related examinations in English for English speaking children.

The end of the road for me

One of the first concerns of H.E. Peter Mafany Musonge when he took over from the Right Honourable Simon Achidi Achu, the undisputed father of the GCE Board, as Prime Minister was

clearly the future of the GCE Board. He dispatched a confidential envoy to me to find out if I wished to continue as Registrar. The troubles I had had and the difficulties were uncountable. I politely declined. Three years were good and all that I wanted for the Board had in fact been achieved. It was time to give way to one who could dance to the tune of the music that the government was playing so as to attract financing to the institution. (Mafany Musonge's only fault was that he left me in the cold giving the impression that I committed some 'crime'. For more than ten years now I have been traumatized, harassed by the same Anglophone public in whose course I risked my life, and that of my family and deprived of the right of a dignified life as an honourable citizen of my own country.)

A few weeks after I received the PM's envoy the position of the Registrar was advertised. I did not reapply. During the Council meeting that followed one of the Councillors insisted that I should be given a chance to continue with the mission of the Board. The Chairman pointed out that he had not received any application from me. I was asked to leave the meeting and I learnt later that when the secrete ballot was cast four councillors voted for me. Whatever the case, they did not succeed to change the tide.

When the Nigeria-Biafra war ended, Gen. Effiong in his surrender statement to Gen. Yakubu Gowon, stated as follows: "Those who made peace impossible have gladly removed themselves from our midst". He was referring to Gen. Odumegu Ojukwu the leader of Biafra who had left his homeland for exile. I can say the same thing today of Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe and myself. We made peace impossible for the course of Anglophone education in Cameroon in general and the GCE Board in particular. We have gladly left the scene and only posterity will determine what contributions we both made towards national unity in Cameroon.

When I yearly watch the institution spill out results of successful candidates bringing pleasure to lots of families in Cameroon and paying out handsome remunerations to teachers, I feel vindicated and fulfilled.

References

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3. Decree No. 93/172 of 1 July, 1993 to create the General Certificate of Education Board.
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Chapter Ten

What can we learn from our former British education officers?

+Paul Verdzekov,
Archbishop Emeritus of Bamenda

In the situation which prevails in our country today in general, and in the extremely important field of our Schools in particular, it appears that it would be worthwhile, indeed necessary, for us to pause and take a critical look at how our School System is going.

In particular, it seems imperative for us to see whether we have something to learn from our former British Education Officers who had the authority and responsibility to ensure that Government Policy in the matter of Education was strictly adhered to by all stakeholders, and that the highest standards were maintained in every School in the former British Cameroons. Inspection of Schools by accredited Government Education Officers was laid down by Law. For example: Section 10, Paragraph One of the Nigerian Education (Colony and Southern Provinces) Ordinance No. 15 of 1926, applicable in the then British Cameroons, laid down the following: "The Manager or person for the time being in charge of a School shall permit the Director or his authorized representative to enter and inspect the School at any time, shall produce for his inspection any books or registers kept in connection with the School, and shall furnish any information which the Director or his representative may demand with regard to the care and tuition of the pupils, the names and qualification of the Staff and generally with regard to the management of the School." This provision of the Law as regards School Inspection was repeated, practically verbatim, in Ordinance No. 39 of 1948, and again in ordinance No 17 of 1952.

Memories of a Past School Inspection in 1951

As we returned from morning Mass one day in late September or early October 1951, fifty-six years ago, we met Mr. Anthony OTU, a Government Visiting Teacher, coming in on his bicycle. He was, practically speaking, the equivalent of an Education

Officer. He came in, altogether unannounced, as was the practice then, to inspect the School which, at that time, was also the Practicing School of Saint Peter's Catholic Teachers' Training Centre. The Staff of the School on the day of its inspection by the Government Visiting Teacher was made up of the Following: Francis Wainchom Nkwain, Elias Yongabi, Raphael Awa, Pius Suh Awa, Emmanuel Tabifor, Aloysius Aji, and Paul Verdzekov. Mr. Anthony Otu, as a competent professional, carried out a thorough, rigorous inspection of the School from the moment of its Opening at 07.30 a.m. till its Closing at 02.00 p.m.; after which he sat down together with the Staff for some official discussions before riding back to Bamenda on his bicycle. In the course of inspection, the Government Visiting teacher demanded to have a look at: our Schemes of Work; each Teacher's Notes of Lessons; each Teacher's Record of Work Book; the Daily Register of each Class; the Log Book of the School; the Visitors' Book of the School. He visited each Class, and sat in to listen to some of the Teachers delivering their lessons. Mr. Otu also inspected us at Physical Training. He inspected our School Buildings, as well as the Classrooms. Each Classroom obligatorily displayed, clearly and openly, a board showing its dimensions, its cubic capacity, as well as the number of pupils authorized to work in that Classroom. The Time Table Chart in each Classroom was equally inspected. The Visiting Teacher also personally inspected the Toilet System of the School, as well as the School Farm. The question of offering a cup of tea or coffee, or of lunch to the Visiting teacher did not arise. This was simply inconceivable! Neither was it the business of the Staff to be concerned with the expenses of his transport from Bamenda and back. The Official Report of inspection came to our School before the end of the School Year at the beginning of December 1951. It was a very good Report. I was able to read it before going on holidays, prior to my departure for the Minor Seminary, Sasse, in January 1952.

Some British education officers

It is well known that throughout the period when the British Cameroons was a Mandated Territory of the League of Nations, and, later on, a United Kingdom Trust Territory (United Nations), Schools were, mainly, the responsibility of the various Christian Missions. This was a deliberate policy of the British

authorities. But there were Government Education Officers who were responsible, as already pointed out, for seeing to it that Government Policy and Legislation in the matter of Education were strictly adhered to by all those involved in the running of Schools. Some of these British Education Officers, who usually resided at Buea, were people like: Wilson Plant; Tolfree; E. A. L. Gaskin; A. Hunt Cooke; W. E. Holt; A. B. Cozens; Miss H. Gregory; Mr. G. N. Herington, etc.

Some Examples of Inspection

On November 17th and 18th, 1947, a rigorous inspection of Saint Joseph College, Sasse, was carried out by the following British Officers: Miss H. Gregory, Provincial education Officers, Cameroons Province; Mr. G. N. Herington, Senior Rural Education Officer, and Mr. W. E. Holt, Chief Inspectors of Education, Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. The six and a half page close-typed Report of this Inspection makes very interesting, indeed very educative, reading. The Inspectors paid close attention, as the Report clearly testifies, to the teaching of English, Latin, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, biology, etc. The Report shows that the Inspectors went into such matters as: the School Time Table; Records; Text Books and Reference Books; Book-keeping; Handicrafts; the School Farm; Students' Clubs; the School Magazine. They observed that "the least satisfactory part of the organization of the school is the arrangement for catering and cooking. This is at present done individually as regards catering and in small groups for cooking." The Inspectors manifested great admiration for the teaching of English, for example, in Sasse College. In Middle Six, the Report says: "Here and in other classes English is taught by a method which demands a very great deal from the teacher. That is, the pupils write repeated compositions and the mistakes in these form the basis of a great deal of the teaching. Clause analysis of passages selected by the teacher is used as the other main means of training. The method is effective and the pupils' compositions show a high standard of correctness and expression, but one wonders whether, at least with the present Staffing, the strain is not great on a teacher with many other duties besides English teaching." My guess is that the Inspectors are here talking of Father Francis McGrath who,

Father Peter Watson (Diocese of Kumbo) told me, was still considered in the late nineteen fifties as one of the best students of the English Language to have passed through the University of Durham.

In the Conclusion of their long Report, the Inspectors said: "We have said that although St. Joseph's College was founded and grew up in difficult times, a high standard of teaching and work was aimed at right from the start. We hope that early tradition will be maintained, and that the Mission will not succumb to the temptation that has beset so many Nigerian Secondary Schools, to dilute the staff and produce quantity rather than quality. As long as Sasse remains the sole Secondary School in the Cameroons, the Management is under a special obligation to the people of the Province to maintain high standards and to open an avenue to the West African University. And, indeed, when Dr. Kenneth Melanby, the first Vice-Chancellor of University college, Ibadan, visited Sasse College in 1949, he said that "it was the only College in all of Nigeria which made a lasting impression on him" (Anthony Ndi, *Mill Hill Missionaries in Southern West Cameroon*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2005 p. 138).

Another example of a thorough and rigorous inspection, along professional lines, is that carried out in Sasse College on November 8th and November 9th, 1948. It was carried out by two British Officers: Mr. A. Cozens, Provincial Education Officer, Cameroons Province, and Mr. A. H. Parnaby, acting Chief Inspectors of Education, Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. This inspection, which lasted two whole days, took place one year after the previous inspection of November 1947. The Report of Inspection noted that the Management of the School had taken appropriate action in the light of the previous inspection. It noted, for example: "The cooking and catering arrangements have been bee put on a sounder footing that last year. The old kitchen has been relegated to a wood store and a new kitchen has been built next to the refectory. Catering is done by a food committee who are given £18 a week by the Principal and each class in turn buys the food." "The only really unsatisfactory feature about the School was the sanitation. The old pit latrine had collapsed, and it had not been possible to prepare a permanent one for some months owing to the rainy season. In

the meantime, five small temporary latrines wee in use, and the surroundings of one of them were in a most unhygienic condition." For the rest, the Report clearly shows that the Inspectors were genuinely impressed and highly satisfied with all other aspects of the School. They inspected Classroom work in every Class, and closely observed the teaching of English, Mathematics, Latin, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc. With regard to the teaching of English in Middle Six, for example, the Report of Inspection says: "As last year the pupils write many long compositions and discussions of the errors in these forms the basis of much of the teaching in this and other classes. The success of this method is shown in the generally high standard of spoken and written English, but it demands a great deal of work in corrections. In spite of the amount of written work done the corrections were most thorough." "Latin was being soundly taught on orthodox lines from Longmans' Latin Course. The boys know their grammar and get plenty of practice in using it in written work. Corrections wee careful and thorough. The Teacher in Class Four should be more particular about his pronunciation of final consonants. For example his pronunciation of amaverim, amaveris, amaverit in each case sounded like amaveri and little difference could be detected." Inspectors also observed, very carefully, the standard of Physical training in the School.

In the Conclusion of their Report of Inspection, Messrs Cozens and Parnaby wrote: "In spite of slight dilution of the staff the previous high standard of work at Sasse has been well maintained. It is to be hoped that this dilution will go not further, and that no increase in numbers will be allowed unless qualified staff is available. The vigour or the teaching and the enthusiasm for the School shown by both Staff and Pupils make this a very pleasant School to visit." Cameroonians gradually take over the Inspection of Schools.

As from the second half lf the nineteen fifties onwards, a few qualified and experienced Cameroonians gradually began to be appointed as government Education Officers. The few names that readily come to my mind are those of Mr. E. K. Martin; Mr. Stephen Acha Morfaw; and Mrs. Dorothy Atabong who served as Education Officer for Victoria (now Fako) Division from 1960 to 1970. These Cameroonians normally maintained the high

standards of School Inspection which they inherited from their British predecessors. They served as true professionals, as Education Officers driven by selflessness as well as by the Common Good of Parents and Pupils, as well as of the country as a whole. Nothing shoddy was given any quarter in their work. They were Civil Servants in the true sense of the word. These Cameroonian Inspectors of the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties carried out School Inspection regularly, as I personally remember from the time when I was Acting Parish Priest in Victoria (now Limbe) in the second half of 1969. In particular, nothing even remotely smacking of Bribery and Corruption was ever allowed to taint or tarnish their work as Education Officers. Objectivity and Professionalism were the hallmarks of their work.

What is the Situation Today?

What is the situation of School Inspection today in the territory formerly known as the Southern Cameroons (later, the Federated State of West Cameroon)? One fears that as the years pass, many people in the former Federated State of West Cameroon, especially those who are forty-five years old and under, do not really know what life looked like in this part of our country. That is why a keen observer of events in this country has rightly said: "To many young minds the description of life in Southern (West) Cameroons would sound like a fantasy. In practical terms, the so-called Anglo-Saxon culture, actually a 'Southern Cameroonian Anglophone culture', was apparent in the offices, schools, hospitals, plantations, churches, on the highways, at formal and informal social occasions practiced by individuals in the discharge of their services both in private and public affairs. Initially, it was mistaken for naivety, especially by 'Francophone Cameroonians', but in reality it was a 'culture' identified with civility, broad-mindedness and moral probity, forthrightness, duty consciousness, and above all, the assertive, fearless ability to stand up for one's rights and convictions in the face of all adversity. As a 'culture of truth' generally, in Nigeria, declarations made in court by Southern Cameroonians were admitted without reservation" (Anthony Ndi, op. cit., p. 242).

Most probably, there are still among us Cameroonian Education Officers who are men and women of integrity, men

and women who are genuine professionals, education Officers who are upright, selfless, and transparent in the accomplishment of their work. However, there exists credible evidence that there are some Cameroonian Education Officers in the former Federated State of West Cameroon whose approach to their professional responsibilities leaves a very great deal to be desired. First of all, very many Schools, both in the urban and rural areas, go without regular, rigorous, objective professional inspection for years on end, contrary to the excellent tradition of regular impartial School inspection which we inherited from our former British School Inspectors.

Secondly, rather many of our present-day Education Officers, probably in imitation of other fields of Public Service, lack, unfortunately, a keen sense of the Common Good, the Common Good of Pupils, Teachers and Parents. "By Common Good is to be understood 'the sum total of conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily'. The Common Good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1906).

Thirdly, there is more than abundant evidence that some of our Education Officers, again probably in imitation of what they see happening elsewhere, are driven by Self-Centredness and Personal profit in the accomplishment of their professional responsibilities. Every official service that an Education officer renders to a members of the public must be paid for, a payment of which he, the Education Officer, is the direct beneficiary, not the Public Treasury. This is utterly reprehensible and unacceptable.

Fourthly, it now happens, as I have been most reliably and credibly informed, that on the occasion of the Inspection of Colleges, for example, by some Government Education Officers, some of these Inspectors openly and shamelessly tell the Principals the number of "Envelopes" they are supposed to prepare for the pockets of the Inspectors. These "Envelopes", as everyone knows are Bribes. The offer of such "Envelopes" has come to be considered as something normal, as part of the so-called *System*. Is this right?

Fifthly, the controversy which recently occurred in the

North West Province concerning the payment of fees for a First School Leaving Certificate Mock Examination organized by the Ministry of Education is extremely sad. Some Divisional Delegates of Education (Education Officers) originally claimed that all Pupils were bound to register for this Mock Examination, to pay the required fee of one thousand francs, and that registration for this Mock Examination was a condition sine qua non for writing the First School Leaving Certificate Examination. Such Divisional Delegates of Education brought enormous and unacceptable pressure to bear upon Managers and teachers of Catholic Primary Schools in this matter. It took sometime before the competent Public Authorities brought about the necessary clarification, namely, that the Mock Examination was not obligatory, and that taking part in that Examination was never intended to be a precondition for writing the First School Leaving Certificate Examination. One is led to wonder, however, what lay behind the enormous zeal of some of our Divisional Education Delegates in trying to impose this Mock Examination, and the fee of one thousand francs on Pupils, Teachers and Parents, presenting it as something compulsory? Did these Divisional Delegates really misunderstand or misread the directives of their Superiors?

What can we learn from our Past British Education Officers?

Our Past British Education Officers will certainly have had their own personal mistakes, errors and shortcomings. No one is perfect. To err is human. They, too, as individuals, will have erred in more than one way. However, these Past British Education Officers of ours were also men and women who embodied a number of priceless virtues and all of us would be well-advised to identify those virtues, to internalise and appropriate them, and to put them into practice for the good of Pupils, Teachers and Parents.

First of all, these former Education Officers of ours were, first and foremost, genuine Professionals. They were not appointed as Education Officers, and they were not promoted, because they were activists of one or other political party. The sole criterion for their appointment, or promotion, was their loyalty to the State, and their professional performance, not sycophancy, hypocrisy or servility and “militancy” in this or that

political party. Secondly, our former British Education Officers were, on the whole, men and women of integrity.

An Afro-American scholar who has studied this issue very thoroughly, deeply and extensively, tells us that "Integrity requires three steps: (1) discerning what is right and wrong; (2) acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and (3) saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong" (Stephen Carter, *Integrity*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1996, p. 7). "A person of integrity, like a whole number, is a whole person, a person somehow undivided" (Ibid., p. 7). "A person of integrity is willing to bear the consequences of his or her convictions, even when this is difficult, that is, when the consequences are unpleasant. And if we are never tested, we never really know how deeply we believe" (Ibid., p. 23). Our former British Education officers were men and women of integrity.

Thirdly, they were also Officers who were rigorously fair and objective in their Inspection of Schools, as their Reports of inspection attest. In carrying out their responsibilities of School Inspection, they were extremely careful not to yield to their own whims or caprices. They inspected Schools on the basis of criteria clearly laid down in the Education Code, in the officially approved Syllabi, and in the approved Norms of School Organisation. On their part, and thanks to their solid formation in Teachers' Training Centres, Teachers knew the Education Code, School Syllabi, as well as the Principles of School Organisation. They knew what to expect from an Officer who officially came to inspect their School.

Fourthly, our former British Education officers were usually men and women driven by the Common Good of Pupils, teachers and Parents.

Fifthly, these former British Education officers of ours were *Civil Servants* in the truest sense of the word. They never considered themselves as Masters, but as Servants, in truth and in fact, of all the members of the Public, and, especially, the Servants of the Pupils, teachers and Parents. In other words, their entire formation and life as *Civil Servants* meant that they truly endeavoured to live that kind of Leadership and Service which Jesus taught his disciples: "You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them, and their great men make

their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

Witness of a Retired Cameroonian Civil Servant. What is a Civil Servant? Is a Civil Servant the same as a "Fonctionnaire"?

In three separate French-English/English-French Dictionaries which I have consulted, the French term "Fonctionnaire" is translated into English as "Civil Servant". In the French Dictionary LAROUSSE, "Fonctionnaire" is said to be: "Personne qui remplit une fonction publique", i.e., a person who fulfils a public function. Our lived and concrete experience, day by day, since Reunification in 1961, indisputably bears witness that "Fonctionnaire" differs *toto coelo* from "Civil Servant". Our former British Education Officers were Civil Servants in the best tradition of the Civil Service. But what is a Civil Servant? What is the civil Service as we all knew it in the former Southern Cameroons? A retired Civil Servant, Nicholas Ade Ngwa, ably answers that question in a short paper which he entitles: "The Civil Service as I knew it". "This", he writes, "was a service with standards. The Civil Servant was really a servant. Letters to the Public were usually concluded, no matter the rank of the officer, with the words 'Your obedient Servant'. All Permanent Staff were employed through the Public Service Commission.

The Secretary for the Public Service kept a record of all personnel in service. This record contained all information about an officer, and this information was updated as one's status changed. The record showed date of employment, date of promotion, salary, increments, and disciplinary actions if any, date of leave, marital status, birth of children, etc. Towards retirement, your record was available, from which you were given notice to retire and your pension was accordingly calculated and paid out on your leaving the Service. Every year a Staff List was gazetted; you knew your position in the Service. You lost this position only on disciplinary grounds, thus a junior could never boss his or her senior. And so there was discipline with no question of intrigues to ascertain progress. Meritorious

service resulted in promotion and rise to responsible positions in the Service. All Civil Servants knew their functions and every Head of Service had to defend their requests for extra Staff. All Civil Servants had their names in the Budget Provision for the Department or Ministry.

There was consequently no chasing of dossiers, and no one in authority had to run around ensuring that officers high and low were at work" (Anthony Ndi, *The Golden Age of Southern (West) Cameroon*. Bamenda: Maple Fair Services, 2005. pp. 137-139). In the same paper, Nicholas Ade Ngwa also highlights the issue of the Accountability of the Government of the then Southern Cameroons, and of the Federated State of West Cameroon, to the Public. "The Auditor General at the end of every year published Government's Income and Expenditure for the attention of the Public. State Auditors called on Vote Holders without Advance Notice. Any shortage resulted in a query and punishment if fault was discovered. There was the case of an officer who through carelessness was found short of funds placed at his disposal. He not only soon after that lost his job, but spent 20 years in jail, for chicken feed, compared to what disappears these days. Every office, every residence had an inventory of State Property kept therein.

These were checked and taken over on change of office. Files contained all in-coming and out-going letters. Every page was numbered. If a Document was removed or transferred to another File, this was indicated. Each State Vehicle had a Log Book, which carried the performance of the vehicle. Amongst these were fuel supplied, mileage covered, route, purpose. All these were controlled on a regular basis. Mission orders covered vehicle movements." In the immediately forgoing lines, Nicholas Ade Ngwa captures what the Civil Service looked like in the former Southern Cameroons which became the Federated State of West Cameroon in 1961. Our former British Education Officers operated, with credit, in that Civil Service. They were Servants, not Masters, of the people of this country.

The humblest School Teacher in Mbem, for example, or Belo, or Mfum near Mamfe, or wherever, could address a letter to the Education Officer in Buea, and would be sure to receive a prompt, courteous reply by return of mail. He did not need to go to the Education Office in Buea for the purpose of "chasing a

File". On 17th November 1938, the Senior Education Officer, Cameroons Province, addressed Letter No. C. M. 308/25 to Father Simon Peter Staats to inform him that he was authorized by the Assistant Director of Education to open a Middle School at Soppo. The Senior Education Officer ended that letter as follows: "I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant, E. A. L. Gaskin Senior Education Officer Cameroons Province". He meant it. He was a servant of the Public.

A Cameroonian historian informs us that just before Reunification in 1961, an Editorial in *The Daily Times* Newspaper, Victoria said: "We are bringing into this union a great inheritance, viz., Democracy, the English have not given us fine roads and fine buildings but they have given something far more valuable: a democratic way of thinking and a fine educational system. With this inheritance we need not be afraid to meet our brethren across the border for we are not coming empty handed" (cited by Anthony Ndi, *Mill Hill Missionaries in Southern West Cameroon*. pp. 248-249).

It is highly significant that, shortly before Reunification, Southern Cameroonians should have claimed that they were bringing into the union with La République du Cameroun "a fine education system" which they inherited from Britain. In an Appeal addressed to the Prime Minister of Cameroon on 25th September 1993, the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province claimed that this "fine educational system" was under grave threat. They said, inter alia: "At least thrice during that period of six years (1983-1989), agents of the Ministry of National Education attempted to undermine and subvert the GCE Examination. Each of these attempts was stoutly resisted and checkmated by the resolute and unanimous will of the people of the North West and South West Provinces. This is a clear sign that the GCE Examination cannot be considered, honestly, as an issue of partisan politics.... The process of the demolition and destruction of the Anglophone School System began in earnest in the early nineteen seventies.

At the end of the nineteen sixties, there were, in the Federated State of West Cameron, twelve Teacher Training Colleges (one Government, two Baptist, three Presbyterian, and six Catholic) all of them boarding institutions, each of which offered a full five-year training course for Primary School

Teachers. By the middle of the nineteen seventies, practically all the Training Colleges owned and operated by the Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics had closed down as a consequence of the subtle policy of asphyxiation. The glorious Teacher Training tradition which flourished in the former British Cameroons has now practically disappeared. It was a tradition in which Teachers received professional and ethical formation of the highest standards, characterized by Spartan discipline. The near total disappearance of our Teachers' Training College tradition now reflects itself in the deplorable standards of our Primary Schools.

The responsibility for this lies squarely with the Ministry of National Education. It should be noted that no Minister with an Anglo-Saxon educational background has ever headed that Ministry since Reunification on 1st October 1961...." "Someone may object that we have not mentioned the creation of the University of Buea which would seem to be evidence that the rulers of our country do not want to erode or undermine the Anglophone Educational System. To that objection, we raise the following questions by way of an answer: "What purpose will serve the University of Buea, if the Anglophone Primary and Secondary School System, and the credibility of the end-of-course Examinations are undermined?" With deepest respect one must earnestly appeal to Divisional Delegates of Education, and to all Administrators of Education in the Former Federated State of West Cameroon, to revisit the book entitled: *The Cameroon G. C. E. Crisis, A Test Of Anglophone Solidarity*, published by Nooremac Press, Limbe in January 1996 by Francis Nyamnjoh, as well as the book co-authored by the same author entitled: *Negotiating An Anglophone Identity* (especially pages 162-173), published by Brill, Leiden - Boston, 2003. In this latter book, Nyamnjoh writes: "In a Ministerial circular of 27 September 1983, René Ze Nguele, the Francophone Minister of National Education proposed a new group certificate GCE, stressing that 'it would make the GCE look a little more like the BAC' and help Anglophones to gain admission to higher institutions of learning in Cameroon" (pp.163-164). He informs us, furthermore, that the Honourable Minister of National Education met a delegation of CAPTAC (Confederation of Parents Teachers Associations of Cameroon) on 19th August 1995

in connection with the GCE Crisis. "To the consternation of the Anglophone Community, he even displayed a large measure of insensitivity with regard to the educational system in the country, boasting that he himself had no children studying in Cameroon" (p. 168). To date, according to Nyamnjoh's credible account, no less than four Ministers of National education made attempts to dismantle, or at least to erode, significantly, the "fine educational system" which we inherited from the British. Those who resisted those attempted to dismantle the Anglophone Educational System were usually accused as being enemies of "National Integration". In order to serve the Common Good of Pupils, Teachers, parents, and the entire country, it seems imperative that Administrators of Education in the former Federated State of West Cameroon should be thoroughly aware of this situation which has not ended, so as to be able to advise the Ministers concerned. For the Honourable Minister of National Education was most certainly ill-advised when, on 7th October 1993, he told a delegation of CAPTAC, provocatively, that "he and the Government were always right" (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003. p. 169).

Primary School Course in Anglophone Cameroon now reduced from seven to six years!

There is an important Circular dated 17th October 2006 addressed by the Honourable Minister of the Ministry of Basic Education to: "All Provincial Delegates of Basic Education", as well as to "Provincial Pedagogic Inspector Coordinators in charge of Nursery, Primary and Teacher Education and of Bilingualism." The Subject of this Circular is: "Administration of the 2007 Mock First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examination". The last sentence of Paragraph Two of this Circular reads: "It should be noted that Class 7 will cease as from the 2007/2008 school year".

This is an extremely important decision taken by the Honourable Minister of Basic Education. It is a decision which, necessarily, has very grave consequences for the Anglophone Primary Schools in this country. Therefore, one feels compelled to ask: Who took such a grave decision, and for what reason? Were the stakeholders in this matter properly consulted on this matter of public interest, which has extremely grave

consequences for the Pupils, the Teachers, the Parents, as well as the entire Secondary and Tertiary Sectors of the Anglophone School System? Is this reduction of the duration of the Primary School Course really in view of the Common Good of Pupils, Teachers and Parents? What is the real position of the Administrators of the Primary Schools in the former Federated State of West Cameroon on this extremely sensitive issue?

The Primary School Course in the former Southern Cameroons used to last 8 years. After Reunification, it was reduced to 7 years. It is now to be further reduced to 6 years by a FIAT of the Ministry of Basic Education.

The pertinence and relevance of what Bernard N. Fonlon wrote in 1964, forty three years ago, are plain for everyone to see as regards this matter of the further shortening of the Anglophone Primary School Course. In an excellent and highly perceptive article entitled: "Shall We Make or Mar?" Bernard N. Fonlon wrote: "In three years of unification, sundry uses and institutions, thanks to Articles Five and Six of the Federal Constitution, have now come from the East into the West. Furthermore, in West Cameroon, they now drive on the right; the franc has replaced sterling as legal tender, the School Year has been streamlined to fit that of the East and the Metric System has now replaced the unwieldy British measures. But I have searched in vain for one such use or institution brought into the East through West Cameroon. Outside its own federate frontiers, the influence of West Cameroon is practically Nil. By the very nature of things and by force of circumstances, therefore, the tide is running hard against Anglo-Saxon influence in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Thus, this much is clear that, if we leave things to chance, if the will and the positive choice of our leaders do not intervene, there is hardly any hope of worthy British uses and institutions surviving in our cultural corpus.... With African values moribund, with John Bullism weak and in danger of being smothered, we will all be French in two generations or three!" (*ABBIA: Cameroon Cultural Review*, No. 5, March 1964, pp. 11-12).

Those lines by Bernard N. Fonlon are as pertinent and as relevant, today, as they were written. They are relevant to the issue of the further reduction of the duration of the Anglophone Primary School Course in this country: first, from eight to seven

years, and not from seven to six years! This sensitive issue concerns all of us: Parents, Teachers and Administrators of Education in the Anglophone part of our country, as well as the Public at large.

Support “Fight Against Corruption through Schools: FACTS”

One way in which all of us, including the Divisional Delegates of Education and other Administrators of Education, can improve our Education System in this country is by our committed and relentless support of the Programme entitled: “Fight Against Corruption Through Schools: FACTS”. This is definitely one of the ways in which all of us can endeavour to imitate our former British Education Officers who, as far as Bribery and Corruption were concerned, were men and women who were models of Integrity, Honesty and Transparency, men and women of unimpeachable character, Civil Servants in the truest sense of the word. A Cameroonian Newspaper, *Mutations*, publishes a monthly entitled: *Les Cahiers de Mutations*. Its issue for February 2007 is entirely given to a consideration of “Corruption: La Malediction Camerounaise”, i.e., Corruption, the Curse of Cameroon.

The immediate reason why “*Les Cahiers de Mutations*” takes up this matter in its Issue for February 2007 is the publication of the 2006 Final Report of Transparency International on Corruption, and what that Report has to say about Corruption in Cameroon. Just two citations from this Issue of *Les Cahiers de Mutations* are enough, it seems, to show why all of us, Parents, Pupils, Teachers, Divisional Delegates of Education, etc., need to be in the front-line of credible support for FACTS. Our first quotation is that of a statement by Akere Muna, Esq., President of the Cameroon Bar Association and Vice President of Transparency International.

In a long conversation with Christophe Bobiokono, Akere Muna says about the situation of corruption in Cameroon: “There are no more ethics in the Public Service. What prevails is mediocrity and favouritism. The School System is corrupt (Le système scolaire est dévoyé). Scholarships are not given to the most meritorious. Admission to Professional Schools (Grandes Écoles) is not given to the most hardworking. There are not longer any objective criteria for appointment to important

functions. What matters today is to be someone known by those who take decisions, rather than what you know or what you can contribute to the Service" (*Les Cahiers de Mutations*, No. 042, Fevrier 2007, p. 10 [My poor translation from the French original]).

Another quotation from the same paper comes from what the Honourable Niels Marquardt, the present Ambassador of the United States of America, says about Corruption in Cameroon. "It is with great sadness that I deplore the fact that a well-developed culture of corruption seems to have taken root in Cameroon over recent years. No institution seems immune against this dangerous virus. Corruption is practiced and is justified by ordinary Cameroonians, that is to say, by little children, by their Parents and Grandparents, by Public Officials, in short, by everyone. Acts of corruption have become so common place and so ordinary that certain observers ask themselves whether the word 'corruption' now has a different connotation in Cameroon. To offer something to your child's teacher before examinations is an act of corruption. To offer money in exchange for an administrative act is an act of corruption. To take money in exchange for awarding a contract which falls within the competence of your service is an act of corruption" (Ibid., p. 18 [Again, my poor translation from the French]).

The above two quotations, coming, as they do, from well-informed and authoritative persons, suffice to show us the alarming extent of corruption in our country, a situation which affects even Schools, and , consequently, the young.

Is it realistic to appeal to Administrators of Education alone for change in this regard?

It is true that Corruption significantly affects practically all sectors of Public Life in Cameroon, and that it tends to be accepted by some of our fellow citizens as inevitable. No one can suspect a man like Sabal Lecco, who is a retired Principal Civil Administrator, and a former Government Minister, of not being a staunch supporter of the Political Party presently in power. In a very recent testimony, he openly acknowledges that Corruption is a shameful phenomenon which was not, according to him, as bad in his day as it is today. "Today", he says,

“corruption in Cameroon is a deplorable phenomenon because it is not a secret that there are some Ministers who are billionaires. Some have acquired extremely costly houses across the world. From where do they acquire all this money” (*Les Cahiers de Mutations*, No. 042, Février 2007, p. 18 [My poor translation from the French original]).

This being the case, is it right to single out Teachers and ask them to take the lead in the fight to extirpate Bribery and Corruption? In particular, is it right to expect Administrators of Education such as Divisional Delegates of Education to spearhead the fight against Corruption, and to do so with credibility through their own example? If they were to do this, or be seen to be protectors and defenders of the Anglophone Primary School system, would they not be putting their employment at risk in the present circumstances?

Two past events give one hope that Parents and Teachers are capable of taking legitimate, peaceful action, collectively and with determination, in favour of the Common Good, and for safeguarding the Anglophone Education system in this country. One such event is the peaceful demonstration organized by CAPTAC on 12th October 1993 in front of the Ministry of Education at Yaoundé. It brought together Parents, Teachers, University Lecturers, Businessmen, Housewives, University Students, Public Officials, Anglophones of the most diverse political persuasions, all solidly united in one determined resolve, namely, to save the integrity and credibility of the General Certificate of Education (GCE). It was a marvellous, admirable and peaceful demonstration of *unity* in the cause of the Common Good of all Cameroonian children.

The second such event is the *unity* exhibited by Anglophone Teachers in marking the GCE Scripts of 1993. “When the Anglophone teachers took over the marking of the GCE Scripts in Yaoundé, he (the Minister of National Education) claimed that almost the entire budget reserved for the marking exercise had already been allocated to the former examiners appointed by the Ministry of National Education. Determined not to endanger the Board’s continued existence, the Teachers then decided to mark without compensation. Although the marking period resulted in much personal hardship, including problems with paying for food and transport to and from the

Marking Centres, they still persevered.... It was only after the marking and publication of the results that parents sent their children back to school" (Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity*. pp. 170-171).

The above two events provide evidence that it is entirely possible for all of us, Parents and Teachers, and, in particular, for all Administrators of Education in the former Federated State of West Cameroon, to mount a truly peaceful, united and non-partisan action in favour of the Common Good.

Pro-Cultural and Counter-Cultural Action

Education in our Schools will normally be Pro-Cultural, in the sense that those elements of our cultures which are good, which are not incompatible with the Gospel, should be jealously preserved, purified, uplifted, and shared with others. In the Catholic Church, Enculturation sees to this. However, in the two quotations given above from Akere Muna, Esq., and from the Honourable Niels Marquardt, "a well-developed culture of Corruption seems to have taken its roots in Cameroon over recent years." Corruption is, unquestionable, an evil.

It can and ought to be uprooted, extirpated, totally removed from Society. It is in the face of the evil of the culture of Corruption that every Christian, as an individual, and the whole Church, as a body, are called to be resolutely, credibly, coherently, consistently and uncompromisingly Anti-Cultural. What does it mean for Christians to be Anti-Cultural? It is the celebrated Epistle to Diognetus, written in about 124 A.D., that is, one thousand eight hundred and eighty three years ago, which gives us the answer.

Christians "pass their lives in whatever township – Greek or foreign – each man's lot has determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are remarkable and even surprising. For instance, though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behaviour there is more like that of transients; they take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them, any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country. Like other men, they marry and beget children, though

they do not expose their children. Any Christian is free to share his neighbour's table, but never his marriage-bed. Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh; their days are passed here on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven" (*Early Christian Writings. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1968. pp. 176-177*). Therefore, all of us, Pupils, Teachers, Parents, and Administrators of Education, are called upon by God to be Counter-Cultural in the face of the Culture of Corruption. Corruption is a SIN!

In their Pastoral letter on Corruption issued at Bamenda on 3rd September 2000, the Archbishops and Bishops of Cameroon said, inter alia: "The posting of administrative staff and access to positions of responsibility are often negotiated at agreed rates or depend on whether or not one belongs to the clique of the man in charge. Such is the case too with some official examinations or entrance examinations into professional schools which are sometimes replaced by a mere examination of files. In their turn, Teachers and head of Professional Schools ask for money before a student can be admitted or promoted to the next class. From Primary School to University, it is the rule to have recourse to money or gifts of all kinds in order to be in the good books of the Teacher. At the approach of Examinations, Candidates and Parents, in violation of all Moral Principles, go in search of Examination Questions or the right network to negotiate for Certificates. Our Young People, it should be repeated, thus become all the more convinced that success lies less in hard work and the thirst for excellence than in one's capacity to use one's power and money to corrupt others" (*Pastoral Letter on Corruption, No. 26*).

Many years ago, President Paul Biya once asked a question which I cite from memory: "What kind of Cameroon shall we bequeath to our children?" That question remains as relevant today as when it was raised. It is undeniable that, as part of the answer, it should be a Cameroon completely free of the evil culture of Corruption that we should bequeath to our children. Our Primary, Secondary and tertiary Educational Institutions can, and must, help all of us in this regard. They should all be totally incorrupt! In particular, all Educational Administrators, in imitation of the glorious example of our

former British Education Officers, have a very great role to play. Those of our present Administrators of Education who are already doing their work in the way it should be done, and in pursuit of the Common Good of Pupils, teachers and Parents, deserve to be saluted.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

All African Christians, and all Catholic Teachers, as well as all Members of the Teaching Profession, will be extremely delighted to know that on Ascension Thursday, 25th May 2006, the Diocesan Canonical Investigation into the life of Julius Kambarage Nyerere had been concluded, and that the cause of his eventual or possible Beatification had been submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saint at the Holy See, Rome. Julius Nyerere, as we all know, led his country to independence, and is fondly referred to as the “Father of the Nation”, the Father of his country, Tanzania.

It was this former Catholic Teacher who led the successful fight for the independence of his country. An excellent article in the March – May 2007 issue of the review *New City* (a publication of the Focolare Movement), highlights two virtues of this model politician. First of all, “Nyerere lived poverty in the evangelical sense of detachment from what does not lead to God. In 1985, at the end of his mandate as President of Tanzania, he retired, resisting strong pressure from people who did not want to be deprived of such a leader. He was detached from money. Although his salary as Head of State was the lowest in the Commonwealth, he reduced it three times when the country faced economic difficulties.” Secondly, “Humility is the fundamental virtue that Nyerere personified. He had a passionate concern for a society in which equality was to find expression in all the Institutions and Offices of the State. He never wanted to live in State House which was for him a symbol of elitism. He minimized official protocol and even security measures if they risked appearing as opportunities to enhance his personal status. He always refused to be called ‘Excellency’ or similar titles, preferring Mwalimu (Kiswahili for Teacher), the job he did in his early years” (*New City*, No. 15 March – May 2007, pp. 26-27).

Julius Kambarage Nyerere was, undoubtedly, a

Christian, a son of the Church, of whom every Teacher, and every African, can feel legitimately proud. May the Lord grant, in His own good time, and if it is His will, that Julius Nyerere be declared Blessed. Even now, most Africans acknowledge that he was a model Christian, a model Teacher, and a model Politician.

This book richly documents the battles fought by the Anglophone community in Cameroon to safeguard the General Certificate of Education (GCE), a symbol of their cherished colonial heritage from Britain, from attempts by agents of the Ministry of National Education to subvert it. These battles opposed a mobilised and determined Anglophone civil society against numerous machinations by successive Francophone-dominated governments to destroy their much prided educational system in the name of ‘national integration’. When Southern Cameroonians re-united with La République du Cameroun in 1961, they claimed that they were bringing into the union ‘a fine education system’ from which their Francophone compatriots could borrow. Instead, they found themselves battling for decades to save their way of life. Central to their concerns and survival as a community is an urgent need for cultural recognition and representation, of which an educational system free of corruption and trivialisation through politicisation is a key component.

“... impressively details how repeated attempts by the Ministry of National Education were stoutly resisted and checkmated by the resolute and unanimous will of the Anglophone community... solidly united in one determined resolve, namely, to save the integrity and credibility of the Anglophone Educational system in Cameroon. It was a marvellous, admirable and peaceful demonstration of unity in the cause of the Common Good of all Cameroonian children.”

— His Lordship Paul Verdzekov, former Archbishop of the Bamenda Archdiocese

“Running the GCE Board has been a major challenge. Initially, unwilling to accept defeat, Dr. Robert Mbella Mbappe, the minister, put in place one scheme after the other to frustrate the Board, make it fail and then return control of it to the central services of his Ministry.”

— Andrew Azong Wara, pioneer Registrar (1993-1997), Cameroon GCE Board

Francis B. Nyamnjoh and Richard Fonteh Akum are currently with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal. They have researched and published on various aspects of society in Cameroon.



Langaa Research and Publishing
Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
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Cameroon

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